

DELIVERABLE D2.4

Policy Analysis and recommendations to ensure equal participation and autonomy of older persons

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1. Description of the deliverable

AGE's work on equal participation and autonomy of older persons was structured by these main developments:

- The EU Care Strategy was developed and adopted in 2022, involving important work with the Commission, Council and Parliament, to which AGE contributed very effectively. AGE also created an informal coalition of civil society organisations with a specialisation in the field of long-term care.
- The inflationary developments and the development and adoption of the Council recommendation on adequate minimum income triggered an unplanned research report of AGE on the impact of inflation and mitigating measures on older persons.
- The adoption of the Council recommendation on individual learning accounts was an opportunity to valorise AGE's work on life-long learning in the 2021 AGE Barometer. AGE has therefore analysed this recommendation, and provided inputs to various consultations on digital skills and digitisation in general.
- The aftermath of COVID-19 continues to be important to older persons' organisations. To ensure that the failings of the past are not forgotten and give the opportunity to correct actions and policies that led to the disaster especially for older persons, AGE supported the establishment and the work of the EP Special Committee. An initiative of an AGE member for a harmonised EU number for senior helplines also led to advocacy action by AGE and members.
- AGE contribution in the Ministerial Conference "*A sustainable World for All Ages – Joining forces for solidarity and equal opportunities*" from 16 to 17 June 2022 was the opportunity to call for a revision of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

Furthermore, and throughout the year, AGE prepared the AGE Barometer 2023, which will focus on employment policies to support employment of older persons. AGE has conducted an internal survey and is still busy analysing these contents in view of the publication of the Barometer in 2023.

2. Key outcomes

2.1. Dignified and Healthy Ageing

Our work on dignified and healthy ageing, including long-term care, focussed on the development of the European Care Strategy. We aimed to bring together a coalition of Stakeholders in the Coalition of Civil Society Organisations on Long-Term Care (CSO coalition on LTC), to ensure that the interests of persons in need for care, social purpose service providers, public health experts and others were adequately taken into consideration. Internally, we built on our work of 2021 on rethinking long-term care to further elaborate our advocacy position and bring in the unique voice of older persons. We also worked with the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee in the development of their institutional positions on long-term care.

2.1.1. Response to call for evidence on EU Care Strategy

As the European Commission called for contributions in the development of the EU Care Strategy in Spring, we responded to the public call for evidence.

a) Consultation method

We drafted our input based on the wide brainstorming exercise 'Rethinking Long-Term Care', conducted throughout 2021 in a succession of four webinars open to all AGE members and developed together with our Task Force on Dignified and Healthy Ageing. We annexed the resulting policy brief to our submission to the Call for Evidence, and condensed it in a number of key principles, which were discussed in the meetings of the TF on Dignified and Healthy Ageing.

b) Content of the paper

To draw up our suggestions for an EU Strategy on long-term care, we built on our policy brief of 2021 'Care must empower us throughout our lives', sketching out concrete principles that need to be respected in policies that aim to implement a rights-based approach to long-term care. Given the limited competence of the European Union on social protection, we put the emphasis on common principles, in line with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Pillar of Social Rights, which the EU can promote via its actions. This also fit the announcement of the legal instrument chosen by the European Commission for the EU Care Strategy – a communication and a proposal for a Council recommendation.

c) Outcomes

The paper is accessible on AGE's website and on the website of the EC's call for evidence. We further explained our position in an article for our newsletter CoverAGE. We also referred to the position regularly in the continuation of the year.

Commission officials expressed orally their gratitude for the quality of the submission and stated that it had notably influenced the list of quality principles for long-term care services proposed as an annex to the Council Recommendation on Long-Term Care.

2.1.2. Amendments to EMPL/FEMM report on a common European Action on Care

In parallel to the European Commission, the European Parliament prepared a resolution on Common European Action on Care, led jointly by the Committee for Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee for Women's Rights and Gender Equality.
AGE was in a fruitful exchange with the rapporteurs and a number of shadow-rapporteurs, pitching our position in the form of the submission to the Commission call for evidence, and proposing amendments to the draft report.

a) Consultation method

The amendments built on the contents already developed with AGE members, hence no specific consultation method was used

b) Content of the paper

AGE in particular aimed to strengthen the rights-based approach in the EMPL/FEMM draft report, as well as the principles of prevention and awareness for and fight against abuse and neglect. After the adoption of the report by the joint EMPL/FEMM committees, AGE and COFACE-Families Europe wrote a joint letter to all MEPs in the Plenary to support the adoption of the report.

c) Outcomes

The EP resolution on common EU Action on Care included many of AGE's suggestions and was instrumental to show broad support for our suggestions.

2.1.3. Letter of CSO Coalition on Long-Term Care recommending the EP report

a) Consultation method

As a leader of the CSO Coalition on Long-Term Care, we held a coalition meeting during which the contents of the EP resolution were discussed among civil society organisations. A decision was made to draft a letter of CSOs to the European Commission to highlight the importance of the EP report, as it included many of the CSO's considerations. AGE drafted the letter and led the process of integrating amendments and collecting signatures.

b) Content of the paper

The letter collected the views of CSOs on common, priority issues for the EU Care Strategy and was sent to the three Commissioners in charge: Vice-President Dubravka Suica, Nicolas Schmit and Helena Dalli. The main items in the letter were the focus on the right to dignity and independence, affirmation of long-term care as a universal right, the emphasis on

freedom of choice, including for informal carers, the role of migrant and minority workers in long-term care and other issues.

c) Outcomes

We received a response by Commissioner Schmit, highlighting that many of the concerns from the EP resolution were effectively taken on board in the EU Care Strategy.

2.1.4. Bay of Biscay, Bay of Care report 'The Long-Term Care Empowerment Model'

a) Consultation method

As part of our previous annual work programmes, AGE committed to organise a panel of international experts to help the Biscay Province reforming its long-term care system. This experts panel, coordinated by AGE, developed a report suggesting key principles based on a human rights based approach and illustrated by examples from different countries.

b) Content of the paper

The Report on the Long-Term Care Empowerment Model is an example of what a local authority can do to respect the principles of autonomy, freedom of choice and independence in implementing its long-term care policy. It starts from an analysis of needs for long-term care and the way it is delivered, explores the enabling factors for rights-based long-term care policies and ways to achieve high quality and drawing the lessons from the COVID19 pandemic.

c) Outcomes

AGE co-organised a launch of the report in the European Economic and Social Committee. AGE also promoted the report, as it is a perfect example of what a local authority can do in numerous interventions, such as through the invitation of Minister for Social Affairs of the provincial government, Sergio Murillo, to AGE's Annual Conference or to a joint event of AGE and the World Bank on ageing opportunities in Europe.

2.1.5. Reaction to EU Care Strategy

a) Consultation method

Shortly after the publication of the EU Care Strategy, AGE commented on the stance it took by issuing a Press release and a Special Briefing, based on the reading of the Care Strategy, the accompanying proposal for a Council recommendation, and AGE's earlier positions on the EU Care Strategy. A discussion at the end of September with AGE's TF on Dignified and Healthy Ageing further helped in refining AGE's position.

b) Content of the paper

AGE by and large welcomed the Care Strategy and the angle it takes towards guaranteeing a right to long-term care to all those who need it. AGE pointed that the principles of person-

centredness and rights could have been made even more explicit. AGE underlined that the principles of prevention and health promotion would need to be strengthened, as well as awareness for, research on and fight against abuse and neglect.

c) Outcomes

The fact that AGE took a position very early after the publication of the Strategy enhanced the chances of AGE's views to be taken into account in the negotiation process in the Council. Together with partners of the CSO coalition on Long-Term Caren we co-organised a debate in the EESC on first reactions from stakeholders, where two Council delegations attended and interacted with AGE on our points of view. These exchanges were instrumental in weighing on the negotiation process in the Council (see the next point).

AGE was also invited to numerous other events on the EU Care Strategy in the following, such as the EU Social Rights Forum, two debates organised by the EESC, the ERGO Annual Conference, the WHO Forum on Long-Term Care and others.

2.1.6. Response to the EU Care Strategy – amendments to the Council recommendation on long-term care, draft letter to ministers

As the negotiations on a Council recommendation on long-term care have advanced very rapidly, AGE put together our vision of strengthening the rights-based approach, integrating prevention and health promotion, and better raising awareness for the need to fight abuse and neglect in long-term care in a concrete format. Therefore, we drafted amendments to the proposed Council recommendation on long-term care and circulated them by the beginning of November to all Permanent Representations. To increase the impact of our work, we called on AGE members to share the amendment proposals with their national ministers of social affairs and provided a supporting model letter to them.

Consultation method: the amendments were based on the discussions held with the AGE Task Force on Dignified and Healthy Ageing

Outcome

It was difficult to assess the outcome, as the negotiations in the Council were not held in a transparent manner to outsiders; however, in the first political agreement submitted to Coreper for the end of November, several of AGE's suggestions were integrated, notably on abuse and neglect, on social protection for informal carers and a couple of more references to the right to chose and participate in decisions on one's life.

2.2. Adequate Income, Fight Against Poverty and Social Exclusion

2.2.1. Response to call for evidence on minimum income

a) Consultation method

The European Commission opened a call for evidence in Spring to inform the planned Council recommendation on adequate minimum income, part of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. The call for evidence was discussed during the Spring TF meeting of the TF on Adequate Income, Fight Against Poverty and Social Exclusion, and the response drawn up by the Secretariat. It was then validated by writing by members of the TF.

The work on minimum income extends AGE's long engagement in favour of a Framework Directive on Adequate Minimum Income, pursued as member of the European Anti-Poverty Network and Social Platform.

b) Content of the paper

AGE highlighted the specific needs of older persons and the worrying trends of increasing old-age poverty and social exclusion, in particular for the oldest old and older women. AGE highlighted that minimum income must be adequate throughout life, therefore preventing old-age poverty and pension age as well as the gradual erosion of poverty protection as pensioners age and indexations fall below price and salary developments. AGE also highlighted the need to establish a methodology of reference budgets to assess the adequacy of minimum income, even if it is above the poverty threshold, as the main aim should be to live in dignity.

c) Outcomes

We submitted our response on time and it was published on the Call for evidence's website. AGE also further promoted the response in an article in CoverAGE. It was referenced in the Staff Working Document of the European Commission upon publication of the draft recommendation in September. The contribution was successful as the draft text contained language explicitly including old-age pensions in the list of possible minimum income schemes covered by the recommendation, recommending that it should be sufficient for a life in dignity, referencing the national poverty threshold alongside meaningful reference baskets as indicators for adequacy and calling for regularly and statutory adaptation of minimum incomes to living costs.

The work on the Recommendation also informed AGE's positions within Social Platform and the European Anti-Poverty Network, both of which AGE is an active member of.

2.2.2. Paper on the impact of inflation on older persons

a) Consultation method

The rise in energy prices during the 2021/22 winter already sparked discussion among AGE members, and in particular the TF Adequate Income, Fight against Poverty and Social

Exclusion in early 2022. The Russian war against Ukraine and the ensuring soaring inflation further exacerbated the rise of costs of living. In Spring, a TF discussion focussed on ways to respond to the crisis for AGE. The result was a survey sent to TF members and the whole AGE membership in August/September. The survey was analysed and its conclusions submitted by email to the TF for validation.

b) Content of the paper

We listed the items of expenditure that have the highest impact for older persons in different member States and the inflationary developments around these. We also highlighted government policies to mitigate these, including for example fuel subsidies, one-off payments, rebates on public transport and otherwise. In our analysis, we sketched out several cases where older persons had been forgotten in mitigating measures, or where the disproportionate impact on them was not sufficiently addressed.

c) Outcomes

The paper resulting from the survey was issued in a Press release on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, 17 October. The paper also informed our discussion as part of European Retirement Week on 30 November with Better Finance.

2.3. Employment, Active Participation and Citizenship

2.3.1. Mental health in the digital world of work

a) Consultation method

The European Parliaments' Greens/EFA group reached out to us to have our suggestions for amendments on the EMPL report "mental health in the digital world of work". Given the short deadline, no consultation of members was conducted, but responses were based on our positions taken as part of the AGE Barometer and throughout the pandemic.

b) Contents

AGE's suggestions for amendments focussed on digital exclusion of older persons and in older workers in particular, which can create an additional amount of stress and mental health issues for older workers. Looking at the life-span, we also emphasised the need for social interaction and physical meetings for sustainably good mental health, as well as the employers' obligations under health and safety rules, that extend to ergonomic work environments at home.

c) Outcome

The final EP resolution outlines the particular risk to mental health in the digital work context of older persons. It calls for digital education in particular for older workers and the

importance of intergenerational exchange. It calls for fighting the digital divide to reduce exclusion of persons from the labour market.

2.3.2. Life-long learning must be accessible at all ages

a) Consultation method

Through the 2021 edition of the AGE Barometer, AGE members were consulted about the important topic of education and lifelong learning for older people. They shared their expectations and underlined that learning policies targeting older persons were not sufficiently harnessed at EU and national level. Individual learning accounts were highlighted in particular during the launch event for the AGE Barometer in February.

On the specific proposal for individual learning accounts, members of the Task Force on Employment, Participation and Citizenship have been consulted during a meeting 19 April 2022. A draft paper was sent prior to the meeting; discussion of the recommendations and content of the paper was among the important items on the agenda.

Follow-up of the statement was also discussed with Task Force members during the Task Force meetings that followed.

b) Content of the paper

AGE answered to an initiative of the European Commission that published a proposal for individual learning accounts, aiming to help adults to access lifelong learning and employment across EU countries.

AGE welcomed the European Commission's proposal in its intention to develop a lifelong learning culture throughout Europe and to give individuals full ownership over their education. However, the proposal focuses on working-age population without addressing age-related inequalities in access to education. AGE warned against the risks of reinforcing the exclusion of older people and called for the explicit mention of education at all ages, including plain support for pensioners. AGE also reminded that particular attention has to be paid to the adaption of training opportunities in order to meet individual needs, with guided and offline access and reasonable accommodation and transport services.

c) Outcomes

The Policy Statement on individual learning accounts is accessible on AGE website as part of a CoverAGE article on the issue.

It was sent to all officers concerned at national Permanent Representations to share our recommendations with all Council members before the vote on the European Commission's proposal. It was also sent to the Employment Committee (EMCO), the advisory committee for Employment and Social Affairs Ministers in the Employment and Social Affairs Council (EPSCO), and to the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EMPL).

AGE received a response from the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EMPL) in the name of the Director General Mr Joost KORTE, welcoming AGE's

recommendations and commenting on two specific points where the final recommendation did not reflect our demands.

2.3.3. Call for evidence on digital education

AGE Platform responded to a call for evidence from the European Commission on digital education, using its work on lifelong learning and the recommendations developed in the AGE 2021 Barometer.

a) Content of the paper

In this document, AGE Platform Europe welcomes the initiative of the European Commission on digital education to enable factors of success, especially its mission to ensure universal access to high-quality digital education. This initiative highlights the need to deliver accessible and inclusive digital education and training. For that purpose, we call on the importance of meeting the needs of all citizens in their diversity, and to pay special attention to the needs of older people who are often forgotten in the field of digital education and face strong stigmatisation in the area of digitalisation. The latter can only be included in this reflection if we consider education as a right to be enjoyed throughout life, if we include all forms of education, and finally, if we pay special attention to the accessibility of digital education to all groups of the population to prevent the digital divide from growing.

b) Outcomes

AGE Platform submitted its feedback on 15 September 2022 and it was published on the call for evidence's website: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13207-Digital-education-enabling-factors-for-success/F3339849_en
The feedback period ended mid-September 2022 and the Commission adoption is planned for the first quarter 2023. In the meantime, AGE remains available for any consultation following the public feedback period.

2.3.4. Call for evidence on digital skills

AGE Platform responded to a call for evidence from the European Commission on digital skills, using its work on lifelong learning and the recommendations developed in the AGE 2021 Barometer.

a) Content of the paper

In this document, AGE welcomes the Commission's initiative to develop the digital skills of everyone in an increasingly digitalised world and the urgent need to address the digital divide. The COVID pandemic has highlighted how digitisation can help in the context of a pandemic, but also how it reinforces barriers, especially for those already excluded and/or isolated. This is particularly true for older people, as many of them have not had the opportunity to acquire basic skills yet or to keep them up to date. It is even more the case acknowledging the intersectional perspective of some groups within older people such as older women, older Roma or older persons who have low initial education. Older people greatly benefit from digital skills from career changes for workers to improving cognitive abilities. It can also play an important role in supporting families, relatives and carers' workers and overall, significantly improve social care and society as a whole.

b) Outcomes

AGE Platform submited its feedback on 15 September 2022 and it was oublished on the call for evidence's website: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13208-Digital-skills-improving-their-provision/F3339864_en
The feedback period ended mid-September 2022 and the Commission adoption is planned for the first quarter 2023. In the meantime, AGE remains available for any consultation following the free feedback period.

2.4. Accessibility and age-friendly environments

2.4.1. Contribution to the call of the UN Independent Expert on the right to adequate housing of older persons

a) Consultation method

In order to build AGE contribution to this call, we consulted AGE members through the Task Force on Age-Friendly Environments. A first discussion was held during the online meeting of 18 March 2022 (see D2.5) and a call for contribution was also disseminated via e-mails to Task Force members. We gathered 11 written contributions from 10 different countries. Besides our contribution, some of our members also provided a direct contribution to this call.
Beyond our members, we coordinated with key relevant stakeholders and allies, namely ERGO Network and ILGA to highlight issues specifically linked to older Roma and to older LGBTIQ people. We also called on FEANTSA to include the issue of homelessness and older people. Last but not least, we liaised with Housing Europe given the work done by some of their members on social housing and older people.

b) Content of the paper

Our contribution is structured around the questions raised by the UN Independent Expert and covers a wide range of issues notably the barriers to adequate housing in older age (ageism and accessibility), innovative alternative solutions with several examples from different EU countries and the need for a stronger legal and policy framework (See summary in our Special Briefing – April 2022)

c) Outcomes

The final report of the UN Independent Expert has been published on 22 July 2022 and contains clear references to our contribution and AGE members' contributions. This report notable highlights that to ensure the enjoyment by older persons of their right to adequate housing, States have the responsibility to promote inclusive, age-friendly communities and environments and to provide a range of support services that promote their dignity, autonomy and independence, so as to enable them to remain in their home, taking into account their will and individual preferences.
States also have an obligation to protect older persons from forced evictions.

2.4.2. Amendments on digital decade

The European Commission proposed an action plan for a Digital Decade in the form of a Decision of the Parliament and of the Council in September 2021. AGE recognises the importance of digitalisation, but also has concerns about the digital exclusion of older persons, the development of artificial intelligence that can take decisions or provide unsuitable information on health or lifestyle to persons without proper assessment by a human expert. Therefore, AGE proposed amendment to the various EP committees working on the file to strengthen these ethical aspects in the joint decision. AGE also took the opportunity to underline the importance of co-design and co-creation to create digital tools with a social purpose.

2.5. Beyond COVID-19

2.5.1. Two joint letters on COVI Special Committee

a) Contents of the letters

The pandemic has had a deep impact on millions of older persons in the EU. Older persons have been affected first by the lack of protection from infections, testing, access to medical and emergency care, during the first waves of the pandemic, causing hundreds of thousands

of avoidable deaths. As the pandemic and containment measures were prolonged, older persons in long-term care settings were sometimes 'overprotected', leading to loneliness, social isolation, lack of human interactions and separation from links to family and friends. Informal carers, in turn, had to bear the weight of closing or not dignifying care services, stepping in to provide unpaid care themselves, often with an important impact on their mental health, labour market participation and physical health. AGE members have strongly supported this call and have been involved in similar investigative commissions in the member States.

Since 2020, AGE has been calling for investigative action on COVID-19 in long-term care settings, together with the European Disability Forum and the European Public Service Union, representing care workers. In early 2022, there was momentum for the creation of a European Parliament Special Committee on Lessons Learned from COVID-19. As the decision to establish this Committee was discussed, AGE, EDF and EPSU sent a joint letter to EP President Metsola to support its work and ensure the impact on the first victims of the pandemic were reflected in it.

In Autumn, it became clear that the mandate of the Special Committee needed to be prolonged, as its work had focussed on industrial policy (vaccine production and distribution) and generic containment measures only, not taking into account the perspective of direct victims of the pandemic. AGE, EDF and EPSU sent a second letter to support the extension of the mandate of the Special Committee.

b) Outcomes

The establishment of the Special committee and the extension of its mandate can be seen as direct consequences of AGE, EDF's and EPSU's advocacy. Still, even if a hearing was dedicated to care workers and another one on vulnerable populations, older persons' representatives were not yet heard by the Committee. In January 2022, AGE has a meeting with the chair of the Special Committee, to determine how the experience of older persons can be integrated into its work.

2.5.2. Model letter on senior helplines

a) Consultation method

Several AGE members are operating telephone helplines for older persons, providing psychological and emotional support, guiding through public and private services, helping to overcome the digital divide and eventually helping in cases of abuse and neglect. During the pandemic, these helplines have received numerous called and helped out in tens of thousands of cases. AGE member from Czechia, Elpida, used the momentum of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU to start a campaign for the establishment of senior helplines as a harmonised European number for services of social benefit, according to Commission

Decision 2007/116. The Czech Presidency supported this call and asked fellow ministers for social affairs to sign a support letter to establish such a European number.
On the Czech side, the telephone regulator had already given its approval for the need and feasibility of a harmonised EU-wide number 116 100 for this purpose.
Elpida raised this issue during our physical Council of Administration meeting in October, followed by a more thorough presentation during the November meeting of the TF on Dignified and Healthy Ageing. AGE members by and large supported this campaign

b) Content of the paper

AGE sent out a newsflash to all AGE members, calling for writing letters to national ministers for social affairs to support such an EU-wide number. AGE provided a model letter, in view of the EPSCO Council meeting of 8 December. Numerous AGE members have personalised and sent out the letter.

c) Outcomes

AGE reported on the campaign in our newsletter CoverAGE. The campaign had quite some success among AGE members, but it seems that the Czech minister for Social Affairs did not raise the issue during the informal parts of the December EPSCO Council.

AGE will therefore continue to be mobilised to ensure the support of at least 14 member States (10 already support the proposal) for this helpline.

2.6. Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

a) Consultation method

AGE contribution is built on the three last editions of the AGE Barometer (2019, 2020 and 2021), which assess the implementation of the MIPAA commitments taken in 2017 alongside the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the European Pillar of Social Rights. Members consultations for each Barometers, but also the continuous joint monitoring of policies on ageing, the work on the Green Paper or the 'Age Equality Strategy' and additional research on the impact of COVID-19 on the human rights of older persons, allowed the analysis of the implementation of the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) 2017-2021 of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), and a complete contribution.

b) Content of the paper

AGE took part in the Ministerial Conference "*A sustainable World for All Ages - Joining forces for solidarity and equal opportunities throughout life*" from 16 to 17 June 2022 by the United

Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in cooperation with the Italian Government. Over fifteen of AGE members and three representatives from AGE's secretariat represented AGE.

In advance to the conference, we published a policy statement, in which we called for a revision of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA RIS) towards a comprehensive international framework for the human rights of older persons. In addition, we wrote a letter to Ministers and Delegations who took part in the in the Ministerial Conference to assess the implementation of MIPAA 2017-2022 and call for the implementation of a comprehensive framework on the human rights of older persons.

As a follow-up to the Ministerial Conference, we also published an article on how policies on ageing fail to respect, protect and promote all human rights for older persons.

c) Outcomes

In an article published in our newsletter CoverAGE, AGE reported on the conference, reminding AGE contribution, the declaration of the Joint Forum of Civil Society and Research and the Ministerial Declaration. We welcomed the commitment to mainstream ageing and reminded the importance of listening the voices of older people, using equally the Joint Declaration and the Ministerial Declaration intending to implement national actions on ageing. In terms of follow-up, AGE and our members are committed to monitor governments' actions in the development of positive and coordinated ageing policies, and to support the process of drafting an international convention on the rights of older persons.

3. Relevant proofs – links and annexes

Large files, such as proposals for amendments to legislative texts, are not included in the annexes, but are available upon request – this is to preserve the readability of the present deliverable. Proofs publicly available on AGE's website are put into links. Proofs 'upon request' and proofs for which the links might be broken at the time of reading can be asked-for at info@age-platform.eu.

1. Response to call for evidence on EU Care Strategy | CoverAGE article 'EU Care Strategy is a chance to trigger a rights-based change in long-term care systems'
2. Amendments to EMPL/FEMM report on a common European Action on Care (not published, available upon request) | AGE-COFACE letter to Plenary (in annex)
3. Letter to EU Commission commending the EP resolution on Common European Action on care (in annex)
4. Bay of Biscay, Bay of Care: The Long-Term Care Empowerment Model | shortened version | CoverAGE article
5. Reaction to EU Care Strategy: Press release | Special Briefing
6. Response to the EU Care Strategy – amendments to the Council recommendation on long-term care (upon request), draft letter to ministers (in annex)

Adequate Income, Fight Against Poverty and Social Exclusion

7. Response to call for evidence on minimum income: Consultation response paper | CoverAGE article
8. Paper on the impact of inflation on older persons: published paper | Press release

Employment, Active Participation and Citizenship

9. AGE proposals for amendments for the EP report on mental health in the digital world of work (available on request)
10. Position on the individual learning accounts Policy Statement | CoverAGE article
11. Call for evidence on digital education https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13207-Digital-education-enabling-factors-for-success/F3339849_en
12. Call for evidence on digital skills https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13208-Digital-skills-improving-their-provision/F3339864_en

Accessibility and age-friendly environments

13. Contribution to the call of the UN Independent Expert on the right to adequate housing of older persons 2022-03_AGE_Contribution_on_housing.pdf (age-platform.eu)
14. AGE proposals for amendments on digital decade (available on request)

Beyond COVID-19

15. Joint AGE-EDF-EPSU letter to Parliament President Metsola: Letter | CoverAGE article
16. Joint AGE-EDF-EPSU letter to COVI Special Committee chairs on the extension of the mandate (in annex)
17. Model letter on senior helplines (in annex)

Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

18. Policy statement: 'Time for a comprehensive and ambitious international framework on the human rights of older persons!'
19. Letter to Ministers and Delegations: 'AGE assessment of the implementation of MIPAA 2017-2022: Time for a comprehensive framework on the human rights of older persons'
20. Article: 'UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing: Time for a comprehensive framework on the human rights of older persons'
21. Article: 'Ministerial Conference on Ageing: European states commit to stronger policies domestically and internationally'

*AGE work is co-funded by the **Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme** of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of AGE Platform Europe and cannot be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission. Transparency Register ID: 16549972091-86*

Joint Call by AGE Platform Europe and COFACE-Families Europe for the adoption of the joint EMPL/FEMM report on 'common European Action on Care'

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

We write to you on behalf of AGE Platform Europe, the EU's largest network of organisations of and for older persons, as well as COFACE-Families Europe, a network which represents millions of families, volunteers, and professionals.

We call on you to support the report 'Towards a Common European Action on Care' prepared jointly by the Committees on Employment and Social Affairs and on Women's Rights and Gender Equality which adopted the texts prepared by the rapporteurs Ms Pietikäinen and Mr Brglez by a large majority and including an impressive amount of amendments.

The report comes at an important moment, as the Commission is set to unveil the EU Care Strategy in September, consisting of a Commission Communication and two proposals for Council recommendations, one on setting more ambitious targets for early childcare and education and one for a comprehensive EU-level framework on long-term care. Given the nature of the process of adopting Council recommendations, this is a crucial and only point in time when the Parliament can fully play its role to influence the process.

The COVID-19 crisis has put the spotlight on the shortcomings of our care system, including the way it mistreats and disregards the needs of the persons caring for the ones in need of care and/ or support. These carers in the formal, informal economy and in families are in the great majority women and this gender gap has a cost for all. When schools and childcare facilities shut down, mothers took on a greater share of additional unpaid care work – and, correspondingly, they experienced labour market penalties and stress.

Similarly, **the crisis has exposed that long-term care is still and too often seen as a place at the margins of society**, a place where medical care can be denied, testing not offered, staff not protected. The 2021 Joint European Commission-SPC report on Long-Term Care sounded an alarm bell by underlining that one in three persons in need for care do not have access to home care, almost half of persons over 65 have unmet needs for care and 60% of persons in need for care would find themselves below the poverty threshold if they were to finance care without public support.

Yet, quality long-term care, supporting autonomy and independence, is an essential service to allow us to participate in society as full citizens and holders of rights.

The report before you calls for ambition in establishing accessible, affordable quality care services for children and persons in need of long-term care. It upholds the rights to choice of persons in need of care, informal carers and families in the form of care they would and can receive. It rightly underlines the importance of professional care services to reduce gender discrimination, close gender pay and pension gaps and work towards working conditions in care that allow all care workers to exercise their profession with the pride and dignity they deserve.

We regret the alternative report expressed in Amendment 1, which would reduce this ambition especially in reducing choice for family and informal carers and persons in need of care to determine the way in which they want to lead their lives. It also disregards the important work and discussions having taken place in the Joint EMPL-FEMM committees.

This is a major moment as the European Parliament is set to influence how the European Union defines, values and supports care across the life-span. We call on you to be up to this ambition by adopting the report on Tuesday 5 July.

Yours sincerely,

Maciej Kucharczyk

Secretary-General, AGE Platform Europe

Annemie Drieskens

President, COFACE-Families Europe

More information:

- COFACE-Families Europe, Mind the Gap: the EU Care Strategy must support gender equality
- COFACE-Families Europe, EU Care Strategy : Recommendations for a future of care that supports and recognises family carers
- COFACE Disability Charter for Family Carers:
  European Charter for Family Carers | COFACE Families Europe (coface-eu.org)
- AGE Platform Europe, Care must empower us throughout our lives
- AGE Platform Europe, EU Care Strategy is a chance to trigger a rights-based change in long-term care systems

To:

- Commission Vice-President for Demography and Democracy, Dubravka Šuica
- Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmit
- Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli

CSO Coalition on long-term care: the EU Care Strategy must align to the demands of the European Parliament

13 July 2022,

Dear Vice-President Šuica,

Dear Commissioners Schmit and Dalli,

We write on behalf of an ad-hoc coalition of organisations representing persons in need of care, informal carers and care workers, care providers (public, not-for profit and cooperative), not-for profit insurers and public health and health promotion actors. The members of this civil society coalition are all positively mobilised to ensure that the upcoming European Care Strategy is a success and leads to the development of universal and better-quality long-term care systems, rooted in the right to independence, people's preferences, dignity, affordability, accessibility, and universality. We also believe that improved working conditions for care professionals and better recognition and support for informal carers and families are a prerequisite to ensure universal and quality social protection against long-term care risks.

We highly recommend to you the resolution of the European Parliament, adopted on 5 July 2022 on "a common European action on care." The fact that this resolution has been adopted by a large majority of MEPs shows both the high levels of interest and support for the approach to care that we are promoting. In particular, we welcome the following elements of the resolution:

- The focus on long-term care to realise the right to dignity and independence;
- The affirmation of long-term care as a right that is universal and a service that should be affordable and universally provided, integrated into national social protection systems, with equal access to quality care services;
- The emphasis of freedom of choice for the person in need of care and support for the type of care wanted (residential, community-based or home care) and a call for increasing access to home care and community-based care to enable substantial and genuine choice;
- The dire need in member states to increase public investment into care services and regular social dialogue in order to ensure with adequate staffing and to improve the attractiveness of care occupations and of the integration of care;
- The call for informal care provision to be a personal choice and not an obligation imposed by the lack of access to quality care and the assertion that informal care should supplement formal care, rather than the other way round; the call to work on supporting parents and other informal carers with pension entitlements, income support and low-threshold support

services, that encourage and substantiate equal participation of women and men in unpaid care work;
- The awareness of the strong gender dimension of long-term care, as most people in need of care, care workers and informal carers are women, while gender differences are still vivid in many European countries;
- The role of mobile, migrant and ethnic minority workers in providing residential, community- and family-based care and the need to ensure decent work for all, regardless of residence status;
- The intersectional approach and the commitment to fight discrimination on all grounds, also mentioning the challenges that many vulnerable groups, including racialised communities such as the Roma, face in accessing care (including early childhood care), or providing care professionally or informally;
- The recognition of informal carers, including young carers, and the call to support them in the form of services, income support and social protection;
- The affirmation of the role of the social economy to provide quality care services, where profits are reinvested back into the care sector;
- The call for investment in and provision of integrated care with a rights-based approach;
- The priorisation of prevention of and rehabilitation from physical and mental health issues, the well-being of care givers and users, health promotion, health education and health literacy and independent living;
- The call on the Commission to actively engage in the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing and on member states to draw up healthy ageing plans that cover access to health and care services.

We therefore want to express our hope that the suggestions and the framing of the European Parliament's resolution will be fully reflected in the upcoming European Care Strategy and Council Recommendation on Long-Term Care.

We stand ready to support the Commission in the process of elaborating the Strategy and steering it through the legislative process, as well as for the implementation and longer-term assessment of the Strategy's impact and future initiatives that will stem from it.

Yours sincerely,

The undersigned:

AGE Platform Europe

Maciej Kucharczyk, Secretary-General, AGE Platform Europe

Alyna Smith, Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants

Maya Doneva, Secretary-General, EASPD

Stecy Yghemonos, Executive Director, Eurocarers

Sibylle Reichert, Executive Director, AIM

Réka Sáfrány, President, European Women's Lobby

Juliana Wahlgren, Director, European Anti-Poverty Network

Heather Roy, Secretary-General, Eurodiaconia

Elizabeth Gosme, Director, COFACE Families Europe

Johanna Schima, Head of the EU Delegation, Make Mothers Matter

Diana Dovgan, Secretary General, The European confederation of industrial and service cooperatives (CECOP)

Alva Finn, Secretary-General, Social Platform

Dorota Sienkiewicz, Senior Policy Coordinator, EuroHealthNet

Oliver Roethig, Regional Secretary, UNI Europa

Aleksandra Kaydzhiyska, Executive Director, European Association of Paritarian Institutions – AEIP,

Jamen Gabriela Hrabaňová, Director, European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network

Maria Nyman, Secretary-General, Caritas Europa

Jan Willem Goudriaan, General Secretary, European Public Service Union

Your logo+ contact details here

Ministry of Social Affairs

Date

European Care Strategy: call for an ambitious and effectively European approach in long-term care

Dear Minister XYZ

I am writing on behalf of the organisation XYZ, which is [briefly describe your organisation]. We are part of AGE Platform Europe, the largest EU network of organisations of and for older persons.

The Council of the European Union is currently discussing a draft Council recommendation on long-term care, as part of the wider EU Care Strategy. We all know about the pressing issues in long-term care systems: lack of access, in particular for the most vulnerable persons, of long-term care services; lack of choice in the type of care service one can ask for; issues of affordability, overburdening and staff shortage of carers, precariousness of informal carers. This comes in the context of rising longevity and care needs, putting further pressure on a problematic system.

The European Care Strategy comes at the right moment to adapt care systems towards better choice, affordability, quality, working conditions and a better support for informal carers. We strongly support the Commission's draft.

Going beyond, the Care Strategy can be an opportunity of the Care Strategy to reorient care systems on the rights and needs of the person in need for care, with a vision to rehabilitate persons in need for care and allow them to continue to fully participate and contribute to society. Also, the proposed text does not sufficiently integrate prevention of abuse and neglect as well as prevention of care needs in the text. Therefore, we would like to submit the suggestions in annex, developed through our discussions as part of AGE Platform Europe, to adapt the draft Council recommendation in light with this vision.

Commented [ML1]: Is this repetition is correct ?

We would like to urge you to support the Council recommendation and to strengthen the text. In particular, we call on you to be open for change in long-term care systems, and the adoption of national action plans for long-term care would be a good first step to delivering this change and make use of the European experiences and funds available to inspire it.

We would be happy to know about our national position vis-à-vis the EU Care Strategy and the Council recommendation in particular and stay open for a further discussion with you on these issues.

Best regards

[signature]

To: Special Committee on the COVID-19 pandemic, European Parliament

Brussels
21st October 2022
Ref. EDF-22-47

Subject: Extension of the duration of mandate of the European Parliament's COVI Committee

Dear Chair, Vice-Chairs and members of the COVI-Committee,

In July 2020, the European Disability Forum (EDF), AGE Platform and the European Public Service Unions (EPSU), called for an investigation into COVID-19 in long-term care settings, supported by 88 MEPs, as people in need for care and professional carers have been at the forefront of infections and fatalities during the pandemic.

We addressed the European Parliament, once again, on 13 May 2022, in a joint letter AGE Platform, ESPU and EDF, sent to the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Special Committee, on establishing the Special Committee and have been following its work since then.

We see from the proceedings that some important aspects of the pandemic have been addressed in the work of the Committee, such as vaccine development, contracts with vaccine manufacturers and the public health response to the pandemic.

Unfortunately, there has been a lack of discussion by the COVI-Committee about the victims of the pandemic and how the lack of preventive health, protective equipment, and disability and age-based discrimination cost many of their lives. We have not seen either the Committee invite those who were particularly confronted with the lack of public health response: older people, persons with disabilities or workers on the forefront. Such discussion is necessary to draw conclusions and recommendations for the present and future.

We therefore ask you to vote to extend the duration of the mandate of the Committee in the upcoming coordinators meeting and to make sure that voices from those who paid a heavy toll during the pandemic are listened and heard in the Committee.

Sincerely,

Maciej Kucharczyk, Secretary-General, AGE Platform Europe

Jan Willem Goudriaan, Secretary-General, European Public Service Union

Yannis Vardakastanis, President, European Disability Forum

Your letterhead

Your address

To : Minister of Employment or Social Affairs, responsible for older citizens

Insert address

Place, Date

EU Council of Ministers for Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs on 8 December:

Call for support for the Council Recommendation on Long-Term Care and Czech proposal for a senior helpline

Dear Minister [Insert name],

We are [organisation name and short description of your organisation]. We are members of AGE Platform Europe, the largest European network of organisations of and for older persons.

On 8 December 2022, the formal Council of Ministers for Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO Council) will be held in Brussels. We want to stress the importance of this meeting from the point of view of older persons, and in particular call for your support to the proposed Council recommendation on Long-Term Care (file 13948/22) and the Czech Council presidency's proposal for a senior helpline, advertised in the Minister Jurecka's letter of 22 September 2022.

Council Recommendation on Long-Term Care

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed in the open light many of the shortcomings surrounding long-term care in the EU. While increasing longevity means that we can count on an increase of care needs in the coming decades, Member States' long-term care systems are often inaccessible to those who most need access, not affordable to persons in need for care, are under-resourced and understaffed. The shortcomings lead to an overburdening of informal carers, often women, and the associated costs for society. In many cases, long-term care is pushed at the margins of society, and efforts to allow persons in need for care to stay connected to their communities or even at home are not widespread enough. Policies for health promotion and prevention of long-term care needs are not sufficiently developed.

These challenges are, to different degrees, pan-European and a common approach and action on these can make a difference in overcome them.

As part of AGE Platform Europe, we have been following a process of defining what rights-based long-term care means and adopted a position calling for care to be built on its objectives: empowering persons in need for care to stay autonomous and independent. We contributed a number of principles to the consultation of the European Commission, to explain how this objective can be concretely implemented.

The proposed text for a Council recommendation is not perfect – AGE Platform has made proposals for amendments to strengthen the prevention of abuse and neglect, health promotion and prevention, the importance of choice of persons in need for care and care users – but we still think that the proposed recommendation is an excellent starting point for EU-wide action to trigger rights-based changes and investment into long-term care.

Therefore, we call on you to support the proposed text at the EPSCO Council on 8 December, and to follow up the adoption with a national action plan on long-term care and an effective coordination mechanism, as mentioned in the text. Of course, we are ready to be consulted during the development of the national action plan, in accordance with the provisions on stakeholder involvement in the draft text.

Proposal for a senior helpline

The Czech Council Presidency has called on colleagues in the EPSCO Council to support an initiative for establishing a harmonised European number 116 100, promoted by the Elpida, a member of AGE Platform Europe in Czechia. Several AGE members are running national helplines similar to Elpida in European countries, a valuable social support for older persons who might be confronted to urgent questions (for example, abuse, risks of deception by economic operators, questions about digital technologies, access to public or private services, loneliness, care or health needs, or questions from informal carers). The continuing calls to these helplines show not only their usefulness, but also the importance of telephone services to persons who are more at risk of digital exclusion than other groups. The proposal also has a strong European dimension, as a harmonised European number can be used by older persons travelling for reasons of tourism or another exercise of their right to free circulation.

The Czech Presidency calls for your support to the proposal, which requires 14 member States to agree so that the Commission can initiate the procedure to reserve the phone number as a European harmonised number. It should be noted that your support does not mean that already existing and known numbers need to stop their work (the 116 100 number could simply redirect to these services), nor that it implies financial support from your government or the EU to a helpline service. It also does not mean that you need to introduce such a number if this is not your government's policy. Simply, your support enables the proposal to go ahead and bring an added value to the growing number of older citizens in Member States that have operators for senior helplines.

For any question on the proposal, you are welcome to contact the Czech organisation Elpida at the origin of this proposal (katerina.bohata@elpida.cz) [, or insert a domestic senior helpline operator if you know one in your Member State].

We call on you to support the proposal for a harmonised European number for senior helplines, 116 100, by communicating your support to Minister Marian Jurecka in response to his letter; and to support the proposal during the EPSCO Council meeting on 8 December.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or remarks on the two points that we bring to your attention in this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Signature