*Article by **Filip Hamro-Drotz,** representing the **Confederation of Swedish-Speaking Pensioners in Finland**, a member of AGE Platform Europe.*

ENGLISH VERSION

Age-friendly cities and municipalities are needed

The concept of "age-friendly cities and municipalities" has spread internationally over recent decades, since the World Health Organization (WHO) launched the global network of "Age-Friendly Cities and Communities" in the early 2000s.

The concept of "age-friendly cities and municipalities" has spread internationally over recent decades, since the World Health Organization (WHO) launched the global network of "Age-Friendly Cities and Communities" in the early 2000s.

Today, more than 1,500 cities and municipalities are estimated to have joined the network. The rapidly ageing population is likely a key driving force behind this development.

In their urban planning, these cities and municipalities aim to create places and environments that are accessible, comfortable and safe for residents of all ages, including families with young children and older people—while also taking into account their financial resources and possible limitations in mobility. Such planning affects society as a whole, for example the location of shops, schools, childcare facilities, pharmacies and care homes; walking and cycling routes; infrastructure including public transport; health centres, public authorities, parks, squares and playgrounds; and, not least, affordable housing.

The intention is for planning to be inclusive—in other words, residents are given the opportunity to actively participate in and contribute to the process, thereby feeling a sense of involvement in shaping their city or municipality.

This kind of urban planning is particularly important for an ageing population. It can reduce the risk of social and physical marginalisation and urban inequality. It can also strengthen feelings of safety, well-being and belonging. For older people, opportunities for social contact, an age-friendly environment (for example access to toilets and resting places/benches), access to services and transport, and well-organised healthcare are especially important.

Cities and municipalities can apply for membership in WHO's network. Approval is based on whether the city or municipality meets the criteria for membership.

Filip Hamro-Drotz
Representing the Confederation of Swedish-Speaking Pensioners in Finland,
a member of AGE Platform Europe.