Joint Statement on the Role of the European Union in the Development of a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons

29 April 2026

Population ageing is one of the most profound demographic transformations of our time. While increased longevity represents a major social achievement, older persons across the world continue to face widespread age-based discrimination, barriers to participation, unequal access to services, and gaps in the protection of their human rights. Despite the existence of multiple international human rights instruments, there is currently no dedicated, legally binding United Nations convention specifically addressing the rights of older persons. At the same time, the European Union does not yet have a comprehensive strategy specifically addressing age discrimination and the rights of older persons.

Discussions on the need for stronger international protection have been ongoing at United Nations level since 2010, notably within the framework of the UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing. In 2024, an important step forward was taken with the launch of a new intergovernmental process mandated to elaborate a United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. The coming months will be decisive, with key coordination and negotiation moments foreseen in Geneva.

In this context, the European Union has both the responsibility and the opportunity to engage actively and coherently in the development of this Convention, in line with its commitments to human rights, equality and non-discrimination and building on the EU acquis in these areas. Member States, have already expressed strong support for the Convention process and fourteen have co-sponsored the resolution establishing the IGWG, highlighting the importance of a coordinated and ambitious European approach.

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament participating in the Intergenerational Forum and other Members present, together with civil society organisations including organisations representing older persons, express our strong support for the development of a United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons and call for a positive and coordinated engagement of the European Union in the ongoing negotiations.

To this end, we call for a dedicated debate in the European Parliament during one of the October plenary sessions to mark the International Day of Older Persons (1 October), with statements from the European Commission and the Council outlining how the European Union intends to engage in the Convention process, how coordination with Member States and participation by older persons' representative organisations will be ensured.

Such a debate would send a strong political signal of the European Union's commitment to the rights and dignity of older persons and would contribute to a more coordinated, ambitious and visible EU approach to the rights of older persons, both within the Union and internationally.

We therefore encourage the political groups of the European Parliament to support the inclusion of this debate in the agenda of one of the October plenary sessions.

We underline the need to support intergenerational solidarity as a core principle of policy-making. Policies on ageing should promote not only protection, but the full and active participation of older persons and their representative organisations, and should recognise the societal contribution of older people through experience, volunteering and community engagement.

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