

DELIVERABLE D2.3
Policy analysis and recommendations to ensure equal participation and autonomy of older people

Beneficiary	AGE Platform Europe
Specific Agreement	101194467
Proposal Acronym	AGE WP 2025
Call **Type of Action**	CERV-2024-OG-SGA CERV-FPA-OG
Work Package	WP 2
Type of deliverable	Report
Dissemination level	Public
Actual date of delivery	13 January 2026

1. Description of the deliverable

This deliverable summarises AGE's policy papers and positions issued to ensure equal participation and autonomy of older people. While other deliverables look at equality and intersectionality, this one is more concerned with socio-economic policies, such as pensions, long-term care, social inclusion, employment, life-long learning housing or health. All our advocacy and policy work is based on the valuable input of our Task Forces, therefore this deliverable also reports on the outcomes of some of the discussions and work mentioned in D2.4. This deliverable also covers the reporting of Task T2.3.

The main processes that we fed into in 2025 are:

- The consultations opened by the new European Commission:
  - European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan
  - EU Anti-Poverty Strategy
  - The next Multiannual Financial Framework
  - The Quality Jobs Roadmap
  - The EU Affordable Housing Plan
- The AGE Barometer, included in Deliverable 2.1, on empowering older workers
- A paper on Mental Health of Older Persons
- The EU Care Strategy
- The upcoming WHO Europe Regional Strategy 'Ageing is Living
- The EU Driving License Directive

We also contributed to the EU Interest Group 'Europe for all Ages', who changed names into the 'EP Intergenerational Forum'. Notably, we helped in organising events and proposed a common written question in December.

2. Key outcomes

2.1. Policy paper on mental health of older persons

The AGE Task Force on Dignified and Healthy Ageing held a couple of mutual exchange and learning discussions in 2024 and 2025 focussing on loneliness, suicidality (see our joint report with GAMIAN 2024) and mental health more generally. Members wished to condense these discussions around a fully constructed position paper. The position paper was launched in Spring. It includes the main areas relevant to the mental health of older persons, the mechanisms leading to adverse mental health outcomes, and presents recommendations for the EU level on the necessity of an EU Mental Health Strategy: https://www.age-platform.eu/mental-health-should-be-a-priority-throughout-the-life-course/

It has been promoted on AGE's social media, dissemintated to the most important stakeholders in the field of mental health and discussed in the Mental Health Policy hub, bringing together stakeholders under the leadership of Mental Health Europe. Its main findings were also presented to the Regional Health Assembly of the Burgundy-Franche Comté region in France in October.

Based on the paper on mental health, AGE contributed to the call for evidence on Statistics on mental health and well-being, pointing out the lack of data on mental health of older persons and emerging issues such as lonelines:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14631-European-statistics-technical-specifications-for-mental-health-and-well-being-implementing-act-_en

2.2. Hearing Health Forum

AGE has participated in the European Hearing Health Forum, given the strong link between older persons autonomy, independence and social inclusion and hearing health, which often is not treated as a disability or seen as a minor impairment. The Forum's Manifesto calls for awareness-raising, prevention, access to testing and treatment and better research into solutions for hearing health challenges. AGE has republished the Forum's manifesto:
https://www.age-platform.eu/prioritising-hearing-health-for-healthy-ageing-in-europe/

AGE also presented its views in December in the European Public Health Platform's webinar on hearing health.

2.3. International Heat Action Day

Based on calls from AGE's German member to make the German Heat Action Day a European action, AGE collected practices and experiences on strengthening the resilience of older persons facing extreme weather events. The collection of good practices was presented at International Heat Action Day (not the same day as the German national day) in July:
https://www.age-platform.eu/international-heat-action-day-older-persons-must-be-part-of-climate-resilience-measures/

2.4. Work in the Care Alliance on long-term care

Throughout the year, AGE took part in the Care alliance of NGOs accompanying the implementation of the EU Care Strategy. Given the commitments in the new Commission's mission letters, AGE led the drafting of a joint open letter of Alliance, calling for strong ambition to continue the EU Care Strategy in the next legislature:
https://www.age-platform.eu/joint-statement-the-commission-must-give-space-to-its-ambitions-for-reform-long-term-care/

This position has been upheld in several fora throughout the year; the Care Alliance is still waiting to be better involved in the implementation of the Care Strategy, as no collective consultation has taken place since the conference on long-term care in November 2024.
Furthermore, AGE has co-signed calls by the Alliance to earmark funding for long-term care in the next MFF.

2.5. Contributions on the MFF – competitiveness, and regional action

Given the importance of the European budget on preparing a society where people of all ages can live up to their potential, AGE contributed to the various consultations opened regarding the next multiannual financial framework. AGE developed a paper summarising all demands, remarks and recommendations and responded to the thematic questionnaires. In the domain of autonomy, AGE calls for safeguarding an engaged European civil society, particularly in the domain of health where some scores of organisations have not received action grants. AGE also made proposals to maintain funding for equality networks and equality bodies, further supporting actions on intersectionalities, valorising volunteering, and allow funded organisations to

support third parties, to have the EU budget reach citizens on the ground with concrete, civic actions.
AGE calls for funding structural reforms towards rights-based policies in the field of health, care and independence, while it should be guaranteed that funds earmarked for education and lifelong learning also reach older persons, given the role of skills mismatches in the low employment rates of older workers.
AGE also made a point on supporting the regions and municipalities to maintain quality of life in remote areas, in order to counter depopulation and loss of access to essential goods and services.

Relevant papers:

- AGE's policy paper: https://www.age-platform.eu/a-budget-for-change-needs-to-take-account-of-demographic-change-eu-multiannual-financial-framework/
- AGE's contribution on funds for cross-border education, training and solidarity, youth, media, culture and creative sectors, values and civil society
- AGE contribution to The next MFF: Implementing EU funding with Member States and regions
- AGE contribution to EU funding for competitiveness

2.6. AGE Barometer (referenced in D2.1)

The AGE Barometer is mentioned in D2.1 as it supports equal rights of older persons, however, we still quote it in this deliverable, as it is an important contribution to uphold autonomy of older persons in the labour market as well:
https://www.age-platform.eu/launch-of-age-barometer-2025/

2.7. Reaction to Council conclusions on older persons in the labour market

AGE delivered a reaction to the council conclusions on older persons in the labour market, reached under the Polish presidency. AGE welcomed the conclusions in several points, such as the fact that they call for combating ageism, support innovative approaches to employment and social protection, and recognise the heterogeneity of older persons in the labour market. However, the Conclusions could have gone further on taking a rights-based approach and acting against ageism and age discrimination. AGE called for concrete initiatives to come out of these conclusions: https://www.age-platform.eu/age-reaction-council-conclusions-on-supporting-older-people-in-the-labour-market/

2.8. Engaging in shaping the upcoming EU Anti-Poverty Strategy

AGE Platform Europe has actively contributed to the development of the upcoming **EU Anti-Poverty Strategy (APS)**, expected to be launched in early 2026. This strategic initiative is a crucial opportunity to address the structural drivers of poverty, including those affecting older persons, and to ensure that EU policies address it under an human rights based approach.

The **Task Force on Adequate Income and Social Inclusion** has been consulted to the draft a dedicated **Policy Paper on Tackling Old-Age Poverty** (see D2.4). The paper outlines key recommendations to combat poverty in later life, including:

- Address age discrimination and ageism
- Adequate minimum income and pension reforms
- Access to affordable and quality services
- Measures to prevent social isolation and exclusion

The full paper is accessible here: Tackling Old-Age Poverty – AGE Policy Paper
AGE shared its recommendations in a meeting with the **Cabinet of Executive Vice-President Roxana Mînzatu**, discussing many flagship initiatives in the context of employment and social rights, including the upcoming Anti-Poverty Strategy . The recommendations were reiterated in AGE answer to the **European Commission's call for contributions** to the Anti-Poverty Strategy, ensuring that the voices and needs of older people are reflected in the policy design: Feedback from: AGE Platform Europe
AGE joined the **EU-wide coalition led by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)**, advocating for a comprehensive and inclusive strategy that leaves no one behind. As a member of this coalition, AGE contributed to a joint statement on Eradicating poverty by 2025 and the EMPL Committee APS report. Learn more about the coalition here: AGE joins the coalition for an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy
Finally, AGE participated in the **UN Expert Roundtable** on *"An EU Anti-Poverty Strategy grounded in human rights"*, reinforcing the importance of a rights-based approach to poverty eradication and the inclusion of older persons in all relevant policy frameworks.

2.9. Revision of the EU's supplementary pensions framework

AGE was engaged in the discussions on the revision of the EU's supplementary pensions framework, but the initiative was proposed by the Commission only in December – therefore, AGE will deliver a position and recommendations, eventually proposals for amendments, only in 2026.

2.10. AGE contribution to the New European Pilar of Social Rights Action Plan

AGE Platform Europe has been actively contributing to the new Action Plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), expected to be launched in 2026. This renewed strategy is a key opportunity to reinforce social rights across the EU, especially in the context of demographic change, the digital and green transitions, and growing inequalities.
In June 2025, AGE published its proposal to the new EPSR Action Plan, outlining concrete recommendations to ensure that social rights are upheld for **people of all ages, particularly older adults who are often overlooked in EU policymaking**. The EPSR, first adopted in 2017, was designed to strengthen the EU's social dimension in response to the austerity measures and social challenges of the past decade. Its implementation has been uneven, and key groups, especially older people, remain excluded from many of its benefits. AGE Platform Europe's proposal aims to correct this by integrating the lived experiences of older individuals into the next phase of the EPSR.

AGE proposal covers a wide range of social rights, addressing many EPSR principles, including:

- Lifelong learning and digital inclusion for older adults
- Gender equality, with a focus on older women
- Age discrimination and ageism in employment and healthcare
- Support for informal carers and work-life integration
- Adequate pensions, healthcare, and long-term care
- Accessibility of essential services, including digital and transport services

Read the full proposal here: AGE Proposal to the EPSR Action Plan
These recommendations were **presented during a meeting with the Cabinet of Executive Vice-President Roxana Mînzatu** and submitted through the formal EU consultation procedure: Feedback from: AGE Platform Europe

2.11. Quality Jobs Roadmap

We submitted our contribution to the Quality Jobs Roadmap so that **ageing and older workers are fully included and recognised within this roadmap**: Feedback from: AGE Platform Europe. As part of this process, we also had a constructive exchange **meeting with the Cabinet of Executive Vice-President Roxana Mînzatu**, during which we presented and discussed our recommendations.
These are based on the findings of the **AGE Barometer 2023**, which highlights the urgent need to address the challenges faced by older workers in the labour market. Older workers continue to face systemic barriers such as ageism, limited access to training and workplaces that are not adapted to their needs.

Despite demographic changes, they remain largely invisible in employment policies, with older women being particularly affected. For employment to be fair and inclusive for all, the roadmap must adopt a **human rights-based and life course approach**. This means recognising the diversity of older workers and supporting their continued participation through flexible and empowering policies.

Our recommendations call for stronger protection against age discrimination, including a review of the **Employment Framework Directive** to address exceptions and age limits that reinforce stereotypes. We emphasise the importance of lifelong learning by strengthening the implementation of existing European initiatives such as qualification pathways and individual training accounts. These initiatives must include older people and respond to their specific needs. **A person-centred approach** is essential, including access to paid training leave, the removal of age limits for training, and the development of learning opportunities aligned with the green and digital transitions. We also recommend revising the **Work-Life Balance Directive** to increase carers' leave, ensure fair pay and protect older carers, particularly women, from dismissal or forced early retirement. Sustainable and flexible working time models should be promoted, including reduced working hours without loss of pay. Finally, we stress the importance of **monitoring progress and policy coherence**.
We believe these recommendations are essential to shaping a future of work that is inclusive, sustainable and respectful of the rights and contributions of older workers.

2.12. Paper on the contribution of older people

To highlight the societal contribution of older people beyond paid work, AGE has begun gathering information and data on activities by older people that benefit society, including volunteering, informal care, political activism, and intrafamily financial support. A first draft plan was presented to the EMPL and AISI Task Forces during a joint meeting on 25 June 2025, outlining key findings and initial recommendations. A policy paper, or a similar document, is expected to be further developed in 2026 based on these findings.

2.13. Contribution to the consultation on the EU Affordable Housing Plan

As part of the open consultation of the European Commission on its forthcoming Affordable Housing Plan, AGE Platform Europe submitted a contribution to highlight the specific challenges faced by older people. That contribution This was based on written answers received from organisations of older people in several EU Member States and on oral elements shared meetings of our task force dedicated to age-friendly environments. It is available in annex.

2.14. Contribution to the development of the WHO Europe Strategy "Ageing is Living"

The WHO Office for Europe has kicked off a process to prepare a strategy entitled "Ageing is Living". This strategy is a core component of the WHO European Programme of Work 2.0, which prioritizes healthy ageing through a twin-track approach - addressing the immediate needs of older adults while advancing policies that promote lifelong health across all stages of life.
The strategy will be built on 4 core action areas:

- Health promotion and disease prevention
- Resilient health and care system (incl. Long-Term Care)
- Fighting against ageism
- Development of age-friendly environments

AGE has been actively involved in online consultations: AGE President, Heidrun Mollenkopf was a speaker at the session held on 30 January 2025. AGE Secretary General, Maciej Kucharcyk was a speaker at the online session held on 27 May.

In close collaboration with AGE, WHO Office for Europe organised an event gathering more than 30 older people from all over the EU on 2 October 2025 in Copenhagen (back-to-back with AGE Administrative Council meeting). It was the opportunity to:

- Present the strategy's proposed action areas and preliminary findings from the regional survey on potential national actions;
- Collect feedback on feasibility and implementation of those actions from stakeholders;
- Identify which proposed actions are most relevant and where innovation is needed to advance healthy ageing;
- Explore how lived experiences of older persons can inform strategy development and implementation;
- Highlight collaboration opportunities and invite participation in the ongoing strategy development process.

Last but not least, AGE contributed to the discussion held by Member States during the WHO Europe Regional Committee on 27 October in relation to that forthcoming strategy. AGE coordinated a joint written statement with 15 other organisations and supported the oral statement led by EuroHealthNet.

For more information: https://www.age-platform.eu/ageing-is-living-age-welcomes-the-commitment-of-who-regional-office-for-europe/

2.15. Assessment of the revision of the Driving License Directive

In 2025, most of the work around the revision of the EU Driving License Directive was around the finalisation of the text with the trilogue and final adoption. We monitored closely the results not only to have the final version but also to be able to inform our members and equip them with clear information ahead of the transposition phase.
Apart from the article published on our website (available here), we provided to our members a in-depth analysis of the key provisions of the revised directive : digitalisation of the driving license, medical assessment of drivers and administrative validity of the driving license in liaison to age (this document is not public).

2.16. Policy analyses and recommendations addressed to the European Parliament

We suggested wordings to various reports of the European Parliament, which were mostly tailored to the political groups' own priorities and interest, so they are not put into the list of annexes, however, these are policy analyses and recommendations in the framework of this deliverable. They are available upon request.
We contributed to the following files:

- EU Antipoverty Strategy: we supported the amendments brought forward by the anti-poverty coalition (see above)
- Advancing towards a care society: addressing the gender care gap
- The gender pay and pension gap in the EU: state of play, challenges and the way forward, and developing guidelines for the better evaluation and fairer remuneration of work in female-dominated sectors
- Regulation on the protection of adults: we supported joint amendments drafted together with EDF, ENIL, EUCAP, Mental Health Europe and Inclusion Europe
- We further took informal action in support of the Horizontal Equal Treatment Directive by contacting MEPs to encourage them to call on the Commission not to withdraw the proposal, an action which ultimately succeeded.

2.17. Work with the EU Intergenerational Forum

Without developing written policy positions, we supported the work of the MEP who gathered under the name 'EP Interest Group for Europe for all Ages', later rebranded as EP Intergenerational Forum, to contribute to the relevant work of Commissioner Micallef in this domain. The activities spanned the following items:

- Launch of the Interest Group Europe for all Ages
- Event 'A new intergenerational contract'
- Plenary Discussion on International Older People's Day
- Launch of EP Intergenerational Forum

End of December we supported the Co-chairs of the Intergenerational Forum to draft and gather signatures for a **written question on ageism**, which as submitted in the last week of business of the EP.

3. Prints of relevant profs

List of annexes:

1. Policy paper on mental health of older persons
2. Article on Hearing Health Forum
3. Heat Action Day Article
4. Joint letter of the Care Alliance – Europe must give space
5. MFF consultation – summary paper
6. MFF consultation survey - cross-border education, training and solidarity, youth, media, culture and creative sectors, values and civil society
7. MFF consultation survey - The next MFF: Implementing EU funding with Member States and regions
8. MFF consultation survey - EU funding for competitiveness
9. Reaction to Council conclusions on supporting older people in the labour market
10. Tackling Old-Age Poverty – AGE Policy Paper
11. Consultation response – feedback on the Anti-Poverty Strategy
12. AGE Proposal to the EPSR Action Plan
13. Consultation response – feedback on EPSR Action Plan
14. Consultation response – feedback on Quality Jobs Roadmap
15. AGE Paper on the EU Affordable Housing Plan
16. Consultation response – feedback on EU Affordable Housing Plan
17. Article on WHO Europe Session Ageing is Living
18. Article on EU Driving License rules



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Transparency Register ID: 16549972091-86

Annex 1



AGE PLATFORM Europe

Older persons' mental health

Contribution to the development of an EU Mental Health Strategy

May 2025

www.age-platform.eu

Published in May 2025 by

AGE Platform Europe | A society for ALL ages

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Based on contributions from AGE's Task Force on Dignified and Healthy Ageing

Special thanks to Sofia Nunes Santos, former Project Officer at AGE, who helped with her expertise

Certain names have been changed by the original authors of articles quoted, they are marked with an asterisk (*)

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Transparency Register ID: 16549972091-86

Executive Summary

Mental health challenges and disorders can arise at any age, including in older age. It is often assumed that ageing can come naturally with declining mental health and depression, but this assumption is ageist and does not take into account the parameters that can be influenced to ensure the right to the highest attainable standard of health across the life course. Policy interventions at all levels can make a real difference and improve the quality of life of older persons, enabling them to experience dignified ageing.

In this position paper, we explore the specific mental health challenges that older persons are facing: older adults can be affected by stigma linked to ageism and to the taboo around mental health, exposed to loneliness, the need to provide informal care, experience physical diseases, disabilities or care needs with a strong impact on their mental health, reduce their activity or social interactions because of inhospitable spaces, be excluded from mental health services or institutionalised rather than treated, or be affected by suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. We argue that mental health issues weigh upon older persons' dignity and rights, but also on entire societies by their associated costs.

We present good practices from across Europe which can inspire more effective action to maintain and improve mental health across the lifespan, and in particular for older persons.

To address mental health issues among older persons, we recommend to:

1. Allow people to speak for themselves
2. Combat social exclusion and ageism
3. Secure and accompany transitions
4. Promote mental well-being
5. Prevent mental health problems
6. Establish an integrated network of mental health services and awareness among other medical professions
7. Support and recognise informal carers
8. Develop a human resource strategy for an adequate mental health workforce
9. Support voluntary organisations to provide outreach to persons experiencing loneliness and/or mental health issues
10. Provide funds on supranational, national and regional level to reduce environmental stressors.

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Introduction

The new European Commission which entered office in December 2024 has put a new focus on mental health, with Commissioner Varhelyi's Mission Letter stating to draw a common approach in different areas of health, in particular mental health and other . Mr Varhelyi also should address the impact of social media on mental health, albeit his mission only refers to young people. A similar reference is part of Executive Vice-President Mînzatu's mission letter, which also includes mental health at work.

'We should take better care of each other. And for many who feel anxious and lost, appropriate, accessible and affordable support can make all the difference.'

President von der Leyen, State of the European Union, 2022

While addressing mental health must undoubtedly be addressed at younger age, it needs to be upheld, alongside physical health, at any age. It is therefore important to draw attention to the specific issues that older people face in mental well-being and its impact. Mental health and motivation are important factors contributing to early labour market exit, among other factors such as age discrimination, physical health, informal care duties and (perceived) skills mismatches. Informal carers, often women who are of older working age, often face social isolation and overburdening, which can weigh heavily on their mental health, while loneliness remains a silent but important feeling of many older persons. While suicide rates are falling in the overall population, they do not recede for older persons. Older persons with impairments linked to disability or chronic conditions also face particular challenges to uphold their mental health. Finally, the need of long-term care can lead to persons being only cared for their bio-medical needs, foregoing the psycho-social needs and inclusion. Mental health is however, alongside physical health, included in the human right to the 'highest attainable standard of health' (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), and an integral part of living a life in dignity.

Mental health problems in older age can have important impacts on people's physical health through reduction of activity and participation, over- or undermedication, loss of income due to reduced labour market participation, exposure to harassment, violence and abuse. Beyond reducing the enjoyment of people's human right to the 'highest attainable standard of health', this also weights on health care and pension costs borne by the society. Therefore, it should be an imperative to take into account the specific concerns of older persons when developing a European mental health strategy.

Why is mental health important?

Mental health problems among older people

According to the World Health Organisation, **14% of adults aged 60 and older suffer from mental health issues in 2019**.[1] The most common conditions are depression and anxiety. Global Health Estimates shows that globally **around a quarter of deaths from suicide (27%) are among those 60 and over**. However, many of these conditions are not diagnosed or are not treated due to stigma and lack of appropriate care.

Economic impact

Mental health issues among older persons lead to **higher healthcare costs**, both directly through more frequent medical visits, hospitalisation and medication, but also indirectly: loss of autonomy and physical health due to reduced activity, need for increased caregiving through partners, the wider family or friends, the loss of these persons' potential contributions to the social, economic and cultural life of their community.

The World Health Organisation emphasises the importance of mental health for healthy ageing.[2]

At a working age, **mental health issues are important drivers for early labour market exit for older workers**.[3] This concerns clinical cases, such as diagnosed burnouts, but also mental health issues that are less perceived, such as 'bore-out', loss of self-confidence, loss of perspectives for career development, a reduced perception of being valued due to (internalised or inter-personal) ageism, or the struggle to combine informal care duties and work. **The economic costs are forgone taxes and social contributions**, sometimes unemployment or social assistance benefits, the use of pre-retirement schemes where they exist (sometimes sponsored by the employer). In a life-course perspective, **early labour market exit also means reduced pension rights** – often disproportionately, as the last years of contributions might be overvalued to encourage people to work longer.

[1] World Health Organization, Global Health Estimates (GHE) 2019.
[2] World Health Organisation, Mental health of older adults, 20 October 2023.
[3] Houtman, Irene and Geuskens, Goedele, Factors influencing early exit from the labour market, Eurofound, 22 September 2011. And Tisch, Anita, 'Health, work ability and work motivation: determinants of labour market exit among German employees born in 1959 and 1965' In: Journal of Labour Market Research Vol. 48, 2015, pp.233-245.

Involuntary loneliness, a specific mental health risk

Following the COVID Pandemic, feelings of loneliness and social isolation have risen in the EU's population and particularly among younger age groups. This has led to the European Parliament calling on the Commission to develop research into this phenomenon, carried out by the Joint Research Centre. There were several publications that came out of this development, and the rise of loneliness in new groups of society is certainly an important phenomenon to be addressed.[4]

'You know, underneath it all I wouldn't mind leaving this world. Everyone has died and I think I'm lonely.'

Alice*, 93, from the UK, who outlived two partners, siblings and her only son, speaking to researchers from Bath University (via 'The Conversation')

Among older persons, loneliness has already been a prevalent challenge even before the pandemic and has not gone away. It can also be argued that many older persons who present risk factors of feeling lonely might not be reached by surveys, for example because they use digital means of communication less than other age groups, might be institutionalised in residential care or have reduced mobility. **The rapid digitalisation of society**, in particular the digitalised access to goods, services, information and administrative matters risks leaving many digitally excluded persons behind, among which there are many older persons, increasing the sense of loneliness and isolation.

Loneliness is a significant risk factor for various health issues, and it is significantly related to the risk of mortality.[5] In particular, it can be linked to suicidality and deteriorating mental health. However, it should be noted that older persons might live in a socially isolated manner and not feel lonely at all, and others might be living with many people, such as in residential care, and still feel lonely. **The reduced number of social contacts is not sufficient to constitute a mental health risk**. Rather than just talking about loneliness, we should talk about involuntary loneliness.

Feelings of loneliness can also be both a risk factor for dementia or a sign for beginning stigmatisation, as people with early dementia might feel ashamed of the lack of certain abilities and social skills, avoiding contacts with other people.

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[4] Schnepf, Sylke, d'Hombres, Béatrice and Mauri, Catherina, Loneliness in Europe. Determinants, Risks and Interventions. 2024.
[5] Holt-Lunstad, Julianne, Smith, Timothy and Layton, J. 'Social relationships and mortality risk: a meta-analytic review'. In: PLoS Medecine Vol 7(7), July 2010.

The development of **feelings of loneliness increases the risk of developing a mental health problem**, such as depression or anxiety, and dementia. Loneliness can be a consequence of other experiences, such as the loss of your life partner, the loss of autonomy, intergenerational conflict, economic hardship, or digital exclusion. Mobility issues in particular can hinder older persons to leave their homes and participate in community initiatives, particularly in rural areas.

Contrary to younger ages, **it seems more difficult for older persons to get out of loneliness**, as they might have reduced social environments and life changes that can give rise to changing perceptions.

- In **Spain**, the 2024 Barometer on Unwanted Loneliness indicates that half of people with mental health issues experience unwanted loneliness, which is 3-4 times higher than among those without mental health issues.
- In **France**, 12% of the population are isolated. Isolation affects 48% of people older than 85 years.
- 3.6 million persons are digitally excluded in **France**.
- The reducing number of shops and services in rural areas mean that there are less opportunities for social interaction.
- Data from **Germany** indicates that until the age of 80, the risk of feeling lonely is broadly similar to the total population, but beyond this age it increases. Other risk factors are low social-economic status, functional constraints and care needs, and living in an institution. More men seem to feel lonely than women.
- In **Norway**, approximately 20-30% of older people experienced loneliness to some degree. Risk groups in this survey were persons over 80, persons living alone, men and people suffering already from physical or mental illnesses.
- In **Poland**, the Medical University of Silesia has found that 25% of people over 80 suffer from subjective feeling of loneliness often or almost always, with an increasing risk with age.
- In the **Netherlands**, 12% of 65% feel lonely, roughly the same as for younger age groups.
- In **Italy**, a 2024 research on social isolation among older people between 2022 and 2023 from the Superior Health Institute shows that 1 on 7 (16% of people aged 65+) live isolated, often with not even phone contacts during a whole week. The study also shows that, although this is a decreasing phenomenon since 2016-2017 (when social isolation accounted for 20% of 65+), this decreasing trend has been slowing down since CoViD19.

Successful interventions around loneliness:

- Often, interventions are left to **volunteer engagement** and organisations, such as the **Red Cross** in many countries, **Dementia organisations**, the Petits frères des pauvres in France etc. as municipalities struggle with their budget. It should be noted that many volunteers who address loneliness in this way are older persons themselves.
- It should be emphasised that **volunteering itself is a remedy against loneliness** and contributes to social inclusion and mental health, therefore the support for volunteering should be part of an approach towards better mental health.
- **Intergenerational initiatives** seem to have a particular potential to address loneliness.
- **Germany** has had a **national strategy on loneliness** since 2023.
- In **Spain**, a **State Observatory for Unwanted Loneliness** exists and is working together with the Ministry of Social Rights on a National Strategy against Loneliness, in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- In **Finland**, **small social circles** to meet people are organised.
- In **Norway**, municipalities organise **preventive health visits** to people aged 70-75 to discuss a variety of topics: safety, activity, loneliness. For some municipalities, however, this is not a home visit but rather a big meeting, which is much less effective.
- In **France**, the Post is having an initiative on loneliness, but which is mainly a service checking if a person is still alive and a little exchange.
- In **France** the association "Générations en mouvement" (AGE member) have **local clubs all over the country and namely in rural places**. They play a key role in preventing loneliness of older people by organizing regular activities.
- In smaller cities in the **Netherlands**, there is a **focus on loneliness since 2018**. Government, municipalities, supermarkets, welfare and health care have implemented actions to fight loneliness with a dedicated week at the end of September. There is a lot of attention and TV ads, especially for older people
- In **Poland**, **universities of the Third Age** provide good meeting points for older persons, and there are 500 of such places.
- Also in **Poland**, municipalities are obliged to **open senior clubs** and get funding for this from the government.
- In **Italy**, many initiatives exist to prevent and combat social isolation many, all provided by **associations of volunteers** (Third Age Universities, Retired Unions etc.). No actions or programmes are provided by the Government or other National Authority. Any public initiative is left to the

decision of the Regional or Local Authority that usually provides financial support to private projects.

- Across Europe, **informal networks of family and friends** play an important role in alleviating loneliness
- **Religious groups**, such as parishes, have traditionally played an important role to reach out to those who have no one near them, and in many cases still do – for example, there is an *aumonier* in residential care homes who often is the only person not directly linked to the service provider who regularly exchanges with a person.

Informal care and the need for support of informal carers

"You are almost invisible … you kind of go in the shadows as the carer."

Paula*, 72 from the UK, speaking to researchers from Bath University about 10 years spent as a carer for her husband and the four years of feeling lonely after his passing away (via 'The Conversation')

Providing informal care to a relative gives rise to a number of stress factors that can impact informal carers' mental health, among which the loss of income due to the inability to reconcile work and care, the loss of social relationships as more time of private life is devolved to caregiving, sometimes physically intense care duties, together with a sense of uncertainty and lack of control over one's life and choices. The psychological strain of seeing a close relative declining in their capacity to function and reason further add to a long-term stress experience. This can give rise to anxiety and depression, the neglect of one's own health need and the corresponding possible decline in physical health. A 2019 review of studies found that **32% of carers had depression, compared to 16% of non-carers.** [6]At the same time, care can also create a sense of self-worth and have some beneficial effects to mental health. It has also become evident that **whether informal care leads to a positive or a negative experience largely depends on the available support services for informal carers.**[7]

Eurocarers has identified important factors that can mitigate the physical and mental health risks of informal care:

- Respite care
- Counselling and psychological support
- Training and education for carers

[6] Eurocarers, Exploring the physical and mental health implications of informal caregiving 2023.
[7] Idb.

- Health promotion and disease prevention for carers
- Work-life-care balance measures
- Access to good quality long-term care

The role of mental health-related stigma

Subclinical depression is often overlooked and not treated, leading to bigger mental health problems further down the line. Also, **stigma leads to underreporting of mental health issues**, so that the real share of people affected by mental health challenges remains underestimated. There seems to be more awareness and arguably a lower barrier for seeking mental health support among younger generations, although stigma still leads to many people not taking action to seek professional help. The stigma is even higher among older persons.

The role of ageism and age-related stigma

In many cases, mental health services are not age-sensitive when they receive older persons. Ageism and mental health stigma interacts, as **often depression or other signs of mental or physical affections can be dismissed as being 'a normal part of ageing'**. This can lead to certain issues remain underdiagnosed, in particular mental health issues.

Depressive disorders in older persons have different symptoms than in other age groups and symptoms such as fatigue, insomnia or weight loss are often attributed to other health problems.

Internalised ageism and mental health stigma also lead to older persons not seeking help or consult professionals when they feel symptoms of mental health issues.

'Ageism is widespread in institutions, laws and policies across the world. It damages individual health and dignity as well as economies and societies writ large. It denies people their human rights and their ability to reach their full potential'

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in his foreword to the UN Global Report on Ageism, 2021.

Age-limits in the access to psychological support

A policy in **Flanders, Belgium**, allowed 18-65-year olds to receive free consultations with psychologists via videocall at the outset of COVID-19 – **excluding older people from an important mental health care** policy from which they could benefit. Vlaamse Ouderenraad led a campaign to highlight this case of age discrimination, and in 2020, an agreement was found to open access

to free video counselling for all age groups, and to extend the reimbursement for physical consultations.[8] To be eligible, people still need to have a prescription from their general practitioner, and this scheme is available only for common mental health issues, not for more heavy or specialised ones.

In **Poland**, the legal framework still allows for r**emoving the legal capacity of people with cognitive issues**, which also means that in some cases, instead accessing mental health care, persons with cognitive conditions can lose their right to speak and decide for themselves and are placed in residential care, prioritising custody over efforts to improve their mental well-being.

In **Norway**, the healthcare system offers comprehensive mental health services, but there are **challenges in ensuring that older adults receive adequate care**. Many interesting plans exist, but they mostly target younger age groups. **Municipalities provide some psychological support**, but due to limited resources there are age limits imposed on this, and this goes is favour to the younger. In addition, many older adults do not seek help for mental health issues due to stigma, lack of awareness, or the belief that their symptoms are a natural part of aging. **General practitioners (GPs) play a crucial role** in identifying and treating mental health problems among older adults, but there are concerns about underdiagnosis and limited access to specialized geriatric mental health services.

In the **United Kingdom**, **only one in six older people with depression receive a diagnosis**, often based on the assumption that it is an inevitable consequence of ageing, or because older people feel ashamed of disclosing their symptoms, or because healthcare facilities are not age-friendly.[9]

Physical diseases, long-term care, and mental health

People with chronic diseases, especially those who aggravate over time or which are invisible, may face particular issues with their mental health due to declining capacities and self-esteem. This is important for people with care needs, but even lower-level impairments can have a significant impact on older peoples' mental health:

- **Hearing loss** can lead to the retreat from social spaces or the reduction of social interactions, sometimes also out of fear to be perceived as rude if

[8] https://www.vlaamse-ouderenraad.be/actualiteit/welzijn-zorg/terugbetaling-psychologische-hulp-nu-ook-voor-ouderen
[9] International Longevity Centre UK, Mind the age gap: making mental health matter across the life course. 2024.

one does not understand another. It also has been discovered to be a risk factor for dementia.[10]

- **Loss of eyesight** similarly hampers interaction via digital devices, even if made accessible by other means, orientation in public spaces, capacity of driving or to read simple instructions and is therefore a major barrier to participation.
- **Incontinence** may lead to reduced social activity and interactions as access to clean and free public toilets and the ability to change pads becomes very important.
- **Mild cognitive impairments**, such as memory loss or early dementia challenge severely patient's mental health as they may no longer feel legitimate.
- **Cognitive diseases** are often confounded with mental health issues. For instance, dementia is often diagnosed too late as it might be mixed up with depression. Also, the feeling of persons living with Alzheimer's to be not taken seriously because of memory issues or struggle to follow a conversation might lead to their retreat from social life, leading to feelings of loneliness and anxiety.

In the context of long-term care**, care personnel are not always sufficiently trained** to also deal with mental health issues. In particular, persons with mental health conditions who might become violent are an issue. Given the lack of space in mental health facilities**, they often end up with sedation – which can worsen their condition** - rather than adequate treatment.

Designing supportive spaces and environments

It is established that mental health issues are associated with stigma, reducing social and physical activity; therefore, **designing public spaces in an accessible and attractive way** can help support this activity and reduce mental health problems. **Public and accessible spaces can help improve mental health, reduce stress**, and offer a variety of stimuli that enhance mood. They provide opportunities to promote physical activity, as well as chances for socialization and connection, which help reduce social isolation and facilitate the creation and maintenance of social networks. All these benefits lead to an overall improvement in emotional well-being. **In particular, green and blue (water) spaces and benches** play an important role for older people to be physically

[10] https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/managing-the-risk-of-dementia/reduce-your-risk-of-dementia/hearing-loss

active.[11] Beyond the behavioural effects, **landscapes have intrinsic health-promoting capacities** as they reduce exposure to stressors such as noise.

Similarly, there is a need to **stimulate social activity for older persons**, in particular older persons living alone, to allow the creation of communities and contribute to their well-being. **Supporting volunteering** can bring a double benefit here, as it creates a supportive social web for persons facing mental health challenges and can be a remedy in itself by encouraging people with mental health challenges to volunteer. In particular, stimulating exchange with other generations is highly valued by many older persons and can lead to reducing the impression of being isolated.[12]

The **WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities** sets out precisely on the development of socially and environmentally beneficial public spaces and would benefit from being better promoted.

The UNCRPD and its deriving obligations, as well as European initiatives such as the European Accessibility Act, the Accessibility requirements in various passenger's rights directives, the directive on the accessibility of public sector websites and others play a key role in making the built environment accessible to people with impairments and contribute to their mental health.

Access to mental health services

It is important to **deal with mental health issues before they might lead to more serious clinical conditions** such as depression or ultimately result in death of suicide attempts. Therefore, access to mental health should be prioritised. Access has different components:

- **Availability of mental health care**: In the context of health care in general becoming more sparsely available in the EU's less populated or depopulating areas, there is an important need to invest here. In particular, even when access to mental health services comes for free, it takes often a long time to have an appointment or there is simply no mental health service available in one's area. Given the stigma surrounding mental health, it is just as equally important to have outreach campaign through posters, information provided through persons of trust

[11] Reuben, Aron et al. 'The Interplay of Environmental Exposures and Mental Health: Setting an Agenda' In: Environmental Health Perspectives Vol. 130(2), February 2022; Zuo, Wen et al., 'Relationship between urban green space and mental health in older adults: mediating role of relative deprivation, physical activity, and social trust' In: Frontiers in Public Health, Vol. 12(1442560), August 2024.

[12] World Health Organisation, Connecting generations. Implementing interventions for intergenerational contact. 2023.

such as general practitioners, articles in municipal newsletters, the general media etc.

- **Affordability of mental health care**: mental health is still not considered to be part of medical care on par as physical medicine in many Member States. For common issues such as reactive depression, anxiety or burnout, patients often have to pay the full amount for consultation. There are however increasingly good practices that can lower the financial threshold to get mental health care

A particular issue is **access for people with physical disabilities**. Psychological care should be a standard part of the care plans of people with other impairments or care needs, especially given the strong link between physical challenges and mental well-being.

Transition to community-based mental health

On par with the **movement from institutional to community-based care** in the field of disability, there is also a movement towards community-based care and deinstutionalisation in the field of mental health. Italy has pursued this strategy already in the 80s. Experience shows that this allows persons with mental health issues to better integrate the community, but under the condition that there is a good network of mental health services that does not allow issues to remain unaddressed.

This also comes with **a reduction of beds in mental health hospitals**, and a pressure to find other places for persons with mental health issues. Residential care staff from the Brussels region report that persons of all ages who are dismissed from mental health hospitals but not "well enough" yet to live at home may be transferred to **residential long-term care, where personnel are not particularly trained on dealing with mental health issues** and where it might be challenging for these persons to find a sense of belonging.

Prevention of suicides and suicidality among older people

GAMIAN Europe has collaborated with AGE Platform Europe in 2024 to explore the prevalence and factors of suicidality among older people in a research report.[13] **Suicide rates among older people are 19.8 per 100,000 in 2021,**

[13] GAMIAN-Europe and AGE Platform Europe, addressing suicide among older people in Europe: a call for targeted interventions and policy reforms.

higher than the average for the EU population (12.5 per 100,000), and higher than average in every country of the EU. **Around 5% of older adults are diagnosed with depression or severe anxiety** and risk factors are many of those outlined above – loneliness and isolation, chronic conditions, disability, cognitive decline, pain and feelings of hopelessness. On the economic side, **financial difficulties after retirement** and the loss of social status create stress and mental health challenges. Furthermore, the loss of a partner, children moving out of the home or their parents' region, the traditional models of masculinity or femininity (especially related to informal care provision or loss of functional capacities), or the awareness of mortality are contributing factors. Ageism and mental health stigma can reinforce these risk factors.

In focus groups, we identified that, **apart from clinical treatment, community involvement and affirmative relationships can reduce loneliness and suicidal ideation**. Integrated care can provide collaboration between care providers, community organisations and mental health professionals, but these need to be properly equipped and trained.

Good Practices

In **Brussels, Belgium**, there was a clearly identified need for access to mental health care after the COVID pandemic for all age groups. The region introduced a policy of '**first-line psychological help'**, where everyone can access up to 10 consultations with a psychologist for common mental health issues for 11 euros per visit, and free access for children.

In **France**, the programme ICOPE (Integrated Care for Older People) of the Occitanie region aims to reduce the need for care and support **by identifying early signs of fragility**. It is led by the CHU of Toulouse. It includes the early identification, the evaluation of a persons' health and risk factors, the development of a personal care plan and the navigation of the person through a care pathway. The programme also includes an evaluation of the mental health of a person (alongside movement, nutrition, cognition, audition, vision). The programme should reach 15.000 people over 60 in the whole of France, but the Occitanie region has added funds to reach an additional 50.000 in its territory.

In **Finland, "Muistiliitto"** (trans: "Memoryassociation") is a voluntary Finnish organization with the mission to foster well-being of persons with memory disorder and their relatives. It was founded in 1988, has 41 regional associations, 14.000 members and arranges a broad range of activities including a newspaper for the members. It is member of Alzheimer Europe.

In **Italy**, there are **community houses** where people with (not severe) mental issues live in groups of 3 to 10. They are supported by professionals. The goal is

to promote their integration in the community whether by mild working occupations or other daily activities (volunteering, daily care centres, etc.)

Recommendations

1. **Allow people to speak for themselves**
   The EU should encourage the establishment of procedures to express ones' informed and free will about preferences and treatments in case of disease, such as **advance directives**, and the loss of legal capacity prevented.
   In settings where it is more challenging to live independently, such as in long-term care settings, the **active involvement of older people** should be fostered, encouraged and supported. They may be able and want to take over certain basic tasks and remain resources to their community.
2. **Combat social exclusion and ageism**
   One in five older adults in the EU is at risk of poverty and social exclusion, with gender gaps reaching 7 percentage points in some Member States. Ageism and discrimination, as outlined above, can reinforce sense of worthlessness and amplify mental health issues, translating into physical health issues. Therefore, the EU should focus on combatting social exclusion of older people in the EU's Anti-Poverty Strategy and other initiatives.
   Ageism and discrimination lead to isolation and disconnection from the environment, which can translate in mental health problems. Therefore, ageism, and in particular age discrimination at work or in the access of mental health services should be actively addressed.
3. **Secure and accompany transitions**
   In phases such as loss of job and income, retirement, development of a need for care and support, informal care provision, bereavement or loss of housing, support services should accompany people of all ages to empower them to cope with these changes, preventing them from developing longer-term mental health issues.
4. **Promoting mental well-being**
   Psycho-social risks should be established as occupational risk factors through an appropriate Directive, leading to more health promotion, prevention and awareness in the world of work.
   The EU should actively promote mental well-being by fostering **intergenerational and community initiatives that allow older people – even without a particular health issue - to stay included in their communities**, combat social isolation and loneliness.

Accessibility of housing, public spaces, services and mobility should be improved, and there should be particular attention to increasing access to green spaces.

Social prescribing: 1/3 of older people who call in their doctor do so with social needs. Prescribing of social or cultural activities can help them to start fulfilling these needs. This implies to create, provide and make older people participate in these activities.

A **European Year on Mental Health** would be a good opportunity to promote mental health and to start a variety of actions to reinforce the EU's mental health systems, including regarding older adults.

5. **Preventing mental health problems**

   Especially in contexts of long-term care, both as a care recipient and as an informal carer, **the lack of integration of care services** leads to a silo thinking, where a particular condition is treated but not its mental health effects.

   There should be **awareness-raising campaigns** about the benefits of active living, involvement in physical and social activities, including for older members of society, and support for intergenerational activities, both in the family and open to people who might not have active links to their families anymore.

   Stigma should be addressed and literacy for mental health increased so that people of all ages can reach out to existing mental health services.

   Mental health should be established as a psycho-social risk at work in a European directive, making employers partially responsible to promote good mental health and prevent mental health issues that can be related to work. This will also help them to reach higher staff retention and keep older workers employed, benefitting longer from their experience and training in a context of skills shortages.

   Given the important impact of physical health on mental health, health **promotion and prevention regarding physical health should be expanded** as well, especially for conditions which can be significantly offset, if not cured, by early intervention.

6. **Establish an integrated network of mental health services and awareness among other medical professions**

   Investing in mental health across the life course will, because of the knock-on effects of mental health issues on the later evolution of life, benefit all generations towards better mental health in older age.

   All medical professions who are in contact with older persons should be **trained to detect symptoms of mental health issues**, to actively ask about mental well-being and to know where to refer persons who seem to face mental health challenges.

Mental health services should be affordable, covered by social protection benefits on par with physical health services, accessible and present across the EU's territories, including more sparsely populated areas. They should have the means to actively reach out to those who are likely not to be able to actively access these services (such as people in need of care). Outpatient and mobile services should be further developed.

7. **Support and recognise informal carers:**
   Informal carers should be supported by adequate income replacement and measures to improve reconciliation of work, care and private life. This should include improving the legislative standard to care leave. AGE has provided a position paper on work-life integration in 2024 whose recommendations apply here.
   On top of work-life integration, informal carers should have access to **counselling and peer support, training and education, respite care,** and be fully integrated into the care plan of a person in need of care.
8. **Develop a human resource strategy for an adequate mental health workforce**
   As part of the skills initiative in health and long-term care led by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu, it should be ensured that all professions that are working with older persons have basic awareness of mental health needs, warning signs, and knowledge about remedy services. There should be sufficient numbers of psychologists and psychiatrists.
9. **Support voluntary organisations and municipalities to provide outreach to persons experiencing loneliness and/or mental health issues**
   As noted, across Europe, voluntary organisations play an important role in maintaining or supporting social inclusion of persons who might feel lonely or have mental health issues, providing an important contribution to prevention. This should be fully recognised and supported, such as by providing administrative or financial support to volunteer organisations, or with professional training and train-the-trainer programmes. They should especially be provided with resources to reach 'silent' members to engage them in activities.
10. **Provide funds on supranational, national and regional levels to reduce environmental stressors** threatening mental health and to provide "therapeutic landscapes" such as urban blue and green spaces and supportive, age-friendly environments. More municipalities and regions should associate and engage themselves with the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities and its national subsidiaries

Further resources

- GAMIAN Europe – AGE Platform Europe, Addressing suicide among older people in Europe
- International Longevity Centre UK (AGE member), Mind the Age Gap: Making Mental health matter across the lifecourse
- Eurofound, Addressing challenges to mental health in Europe: Trends and services (forthcoming in July 2025)
- Eurocarers report on the impact of caregiving on informal carers' mental and physical health
- Mental health Europe, Artificial intelligence in mental healthcarel
- Petits frères des pauvres, France, Baromètre Solitude et Isolement
- European Commission's Joint Research Centre: Loneliness Project

About AGE Platform Europe

AGE Platform Europe is an empowered coalition of older people's organisations. Together, we ensure older people are at the European table and participate in the debates to an inclusive society.

In times of pandemic more than ever, AGE celebrates longevity as one of the greatest achievements of humanity. Guided by values of equality and participation, we seek to combat ageism, promote human rights throughout the life-course, and create equal opportunities to live a full and dignified life.

Older people are the experts of their own lives. Our community is hugely diverse. But our difference is our strength when we speak together. As self-advocates, we have the potential to bring know-how and experience – not to mention countless hours of caring and volunteer work that help society function.

A healthy society provides support at times of vulnerability, while providing space for all its members to contribute. Let's bridge the generation gap to build an age equal society. Our vision is to create the connections necessary for a more inclusive society:

Connecting institutions and constituents

AGE amplifies older people's voices to the European and global levels

Connecting organisations

Our powerful coalition enables older people to exchange experiences and learnings

Connecting countries

AGE is a truly European network, drawing strength from our members' diversity

Connecting people

AGE strengthens communities, empowering older people to contribute actively to Society

Annex 1

TOWARD A SOCIETY FOR ALL AGES

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Annex 2

PRIORITISING HEARING HEALTH FOR HEALTHY AGEING IN EUROPE

30 October 2025



This article was drafted by the **Hearing Health Forum EU** to highlight its Position Paper and Policy Manifesto on Hearing Health.

HEARING HEALTH FORUM EU

Hearing health plays a vital role in ensuring healthy ageing. Untreated hearing loss is linked to a range of negative outcomes, including social isolation, cognitive decline, depression, and increased healthcare costs. Yet, hearing care remains under-prioritised

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in many EU member states.

The **Hearing Health Forum EU** (https://www.hearinghealth.eu/)has published a **Position Paper on Healthy Ageing** and a **Policy Manifesto** to address this gap. These documents highlight the urgent need for a European Hearing Health Strategy that promotes early detection, access to treatment, and awareness of hearing loss as a public health priority.



Manifesto on Hearing Health

By **Hearing Health Forum EU**

The **Position Paper** (https://www.age-platform.eu/content/uploads/2025/10/Healthy-Ageing-Hearing-Loss-A-report-by-HHFEU.pdf) outlines how hearing screening and timely intervention can reduce comorbidities and support independent, active ageing.

The **Manifesto on Hearing Health** (https://www.hearinghealth.eu/manifesto-on-hearing-health/?mtm_campaign=manifesto_HHFEU_partners&mtm_source=age_platform_europe_channels) calls on the European Commission to take concrete steps: raise awareness, support national prevention strategies, improve access to care, and invest in research for evidence-based policymaking.

Read and endorse the Manifesto
(HTTPS://WWW.HEARINGHEALTH.EU/MANIFESTO-ON-HEARING-HEALTH/?MTM_CAMPAIGN=MANIFESTO_HHFEU_PARTNERS&MTM_SOURCE=AGE_PLATFORM_EUROPE_CHANNE

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Together, these publications advocate for a future where hearing health is recognised as essential to ageing well in Europe.

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INTERNATIONAL HEAT ACTION DAY: OLDER PERSONS MUST BE PART OF CLIMATE RESILIENCE MEASURES

2 June 2025



On 2 June, the International Federation of Red Cross (https://www.ifrc.org/) and Red Crescent Societies marks the International Heat Action Day (https://www.ifrc.org/get-involved/campaign-us/heat-action-day). The day is a reminder for the important impact of extreme temperature events, which tend to become more numerous due to climate change. Many older persons are in situations of vulnerability in the event of heat waves, but also persons with diabetes, neurodegenerative diseases and other conditions.

Annex 3

Why older persons face more vulnerability to heat waves

While people of all ages are suffering from extreme heat episodes, some older persons can face a higher risk of dehydration and other adverse consequences. People living in residential homes might be particularly affected because of their disability, disease or care need, impossibility to move elsewhere and inadequate infrastructure.

The building stock in which older people live is often poorly insulated, in particular residential care homes which face a lack of investment from their funding authorities. Older persons living at home, both tenants and homeowners, are more likely to live in housing which has not been renovated for a longer period and thus are more likely to lack insulation and cooling devices, having no respite zone from the heat at home.

Age discrimination in the access to credit and mortgage prevents many older persons to invest into larger renovations of their housing, cementing the issues of lack of insulation. The fear to have to fund future care needs further prevents them from contracting credit, as many do want to leave some heritage to their families.

Spacial planning is important in the resilience to heatwaves: in densely populated urban areas, there is often a lack of shade, green or blue spaces, providing comfort and preventing the formation of heat islands. In rural areas, there might be less air-conditioned spaces available.

The numbers of heat-related deaths is expected to increase due to climate change. In Malta, for instance, the magazine 'Nature' has predicted that heat-related deaths could triple (https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/environment/nature/133376/heatrelated_deaths_in_malta_could_triple_by_2095_without_climate_action_study_warn by the end of the century if global warming remains unaddressed. Spain's National Centre for Epidemology at Carlos III Health Institute estimates that between 2015 and 2024, almost 24,000 premature deaths could be attributed to heat. **These observations call for urgent action**.

How can we address heatwaves from an ageing perspective?

There are solutions at local and national and European level, however. Local health plans can help to raise awareness for the impact and ways to address heat episodes. **The EU could encourage the development of such heat plans through a legislative initiative**. These heat plans can include the following elements:

- **Awareness-raising and public health advice** on how to act during heat waves.

Taking into account humidity levels when announcing the temperatures to calculate a 'feels like' temperature can also help in adequately adapting to more challenging climatic conditions.

- **Communication to health and social care professionals** about how to mitigate heat and how to protect themselves as well as the persons they care for
- Encourage relatives, neighbours and friends to visit and **call their older peers to check-in on how they are doing**
- Open libraries, museums, public administrations, shops and supermarkets or other public spaces with air conditioning to older persons and persons with disabilities to stay for longer periods for free to **get rest from the heat**.
- **Opening of temporary heat centres** which can provide medical primary care, social care, social work, physical therapy, emotional and psychological support, referral service, entertainment, educational programmes on health and other popular issues, self-activity groups etc.
- **Make it mandatory to provide free drinking water,** including in restaurants and bars for passers-by, and not only for clients and communicate on this. Develop more publicly accessible spots to safe drinking water

In the medium-term, the **EU's preparedness and resilience plans and in particular the next multiannual budget** should make it possible to provide access to insulated housing for persons in need of care, older homeowners with low incomes, and encourage landlords to insulate and equip their rented-out housing properties. The installation of window shades should be further encouraged as well.

Similar issues regarding heat waves of course also affect older persons when facing extreme cold episodes in winter. Encouraging insulation can provide some relief here, too, and there are many elements from heat action plans which can inspire as well cold action plans.

In general, health prevention, civil protection and disaster plans should better take into account the vulnerabilities and specific needs of older people.

Good practices collected by AGE members

AGE has collected a number of good practices which exist in EU member states to improve resilience to heat waves:

- **Cyprus'** plan for protecting from the impact of climate change includes the creation

and maintenance of urban parks to reduce urban heat islands, preparing an emergency plan to determine the responsibilities of health and social care centres, including municipal centres, and the opening of community centres to provide spaces of respite.

- The **HOPE Heatwaves** (https://www.hope-heatwaves.eu/) project, funded by Erasmus Plus, developed recommendations specifically to responding to heatwaves from the perspective of older adults.
- **Malta** has multiple measures in place, including the distribution of 'beat the heat' leaflets during high temperature periods
- In **Spain**, the Spanish Red Cross has an agreement with the State Secretariat for Social Services, Families and Disability to prevent the effects of heatwaves on older persons and children and promotes the campaign "Beware of the heat (https://www2.cruzroja.es/enguardiacontraelcalor)"
- The Hungarian Heat Alert System distinguishes between three different levels of heat with appropriate actions for each level
- In **Poland**, all mobile phone users get messages or alerts from the Government Safety Centre in the case of extremely high temperatures and local governments arrange water screens or fountains to help feel cooler. Low-income households have also subsidies for the installation of air-conditioning available.
- In **France**, the national heat plan foresees the opening of air-conditioned rooms to all residents of care homes, electric fans with water bottles to people who are bed-ridden, adapted meals during heatwaves, and the occultation of windows as much as possible. People living at home can contact the municipal services to be included in a town's register and there is possibility to stay longer in public spaces with air-conditioning. National and local public media recall basic recommendations about how to deal with the heat, call on neighbours to be vigilant towards their peers, and local services conduct regular phone calls with people on the public registers. A special helpline is established as well.
- In **Germany**, the Federal conference of health ministers decided in 2020 to draw up local heat action plans by the end of 2025. AGE member BAGSO calls upon all municipalities (https://www.bagso.de/spezial/aktuelles/detailansicht/aeltere-menschen-vor-hitze-schuetzen-1/) to implement this decision, and to build environments that can effectively mitigate heat

Across Europe, and also thanks to the NextGenerationEU's Recovery and Resilience Fund, **subsidies are available for insulation and energy-efficient renovations.**

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More information:

- AGE Platform Europe: A budget for change needs to take into account demographic change (https://www.age-platform.eu/a-budget-for-change-needs-to-take-account-of-demographic-change-eu-multiannual-financial-framework/)
- HOPE Heatwaves project (https://www.hope-heatwaves.eu/)
- BAGSO, German Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations, Press release: Protecting older persons from heat (in German) (https://www.bagso.de/spezial/aktuelles/detailansicht/aeltere-menschen-vor-hitze-schuetzen-1/)

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26/03/2025

Joint call: the new EU Commission must give space to its ambitions on long-term care

In December 2022, the EU took a decisive step towards addressing the long-term care crisis, a critical issue that will determine the quality of life of a growing part of its population. It adopted the Council recommendation on long-term care, based on the Commission's Communication for a European Care Strategy.

The recommendation urges Member States to enhance the affordability, social protection, accessibility and quality of long-term care services for all people who need it. Additionally, it emphasises the importance of supporting informal carers, improving working conditions of professional carers, including live-in care workers and domestic workers, as well as addressing the shortage of the long-term care workforce.

Since then, all Member States presented national reports on their proposals for the implementation of the recommendation in September 2024, demonstrating their continued support for the goals adopted by the Council.

However, the mission letters of the new European Commission do not fully reflect this ambition. Long-term care is mentioned only from the perspective of workforce shortages – a critical dimension, but just one aspect of a much more multifaceted issue. Ms Mînzatu has called for a European Care Deal during her confirmation hearing, and we want to support this wider ambition.

It remains crucial to increase the availability and affordability of rights-based, person-centred, quality care, particularly home care and community-based care, especially in the light of demographic developments and the transition

away from institutional care. The need for care and support should be resolutely acknowledged as a social responsibility, rather than a private one, as it impacts society as whole, and both influences and is influenced by factors such as gender, employment, exposure to physical and mental health risks, poverty and social exclusion and the environment. Therefore, the provision of long-term care, throughout a person's life, should be established as a pillar of social protection in all Member States.

Informal carers - among which millions are women - should be identified, recognised and supported in all Member States, to mitigate the detrimental impact of care responsibilities on their social inclusion, economic situation, health and well-being. Their unpaid and underappreciated labour significantly affects workforce participation, contributing to gender gaps, limited access to social protection, reduced earnings contributing to old-age poverty.

As civil society organisations and trade unions representing people with disabilities, those supported by care services and their families, informal carers, care workers, cooperatives, and service providers for care and services for persons with disabilities within the social economy, we have supported the European Care Strategy since its inception. We now call on the new European Commission to incorporate all ambitions of the Care Strategy into its planning for the current mandate:

- **Strengthen and support health promotion and prevention** to reduce the increase of care needs.
- Assist Member States in developing rights-based, person-centred long-term care services across all territories through the **European Semester**, **European funding and increased flexibility in public spending rules.**
- **Support the development of high-quality support services and measures for informal carers, tailored to their needs**. Legislation should improve the rights to care leave and access to social protection. Qualitative tailor-made support and the provision of support services such as day-care and respite care should be provided. This should lead to improving informal carer's wellbeing, labour market participation, as well as reducing negative social and health impact of caring.
- Support **care service providers in delivering rights-based high-quality, accessible, and affordable care,** while enabling them and household employers to hire and retain qualified workers.
- **Revise the Directives on Public Procurement** to ensure that price alone is not decisive, but prioritises value over cost to truly promote quality, social, and environmental considerations
- **Investigate and prevent the causes of abuse and neglect** in long-term care settings.

- In continuation of Executive Vice-President Mînzatu's mission to **address workforce shortages, improve working conditions,** by promoting fair wages, skills recognition, and social dialogue in the care sector, improving workers' mental health, and fully including vulnerable groups of workers, including domestic workers and migrant workers specifically.

- **Up-skilling and re-skilling of the long-term care workforce** for the provision of person-centred care services. Initiatives such as the partnership of skills in long-term care need to be strengthened

- **Address undeclared work and exploitation in care** by strengthening oversight and access to remedy, promoting formal employment, including through work permit pathways that promote decent work, and ensuring adequate social protection.

- **Tackle financial speculation in the long-term care sector** where profit-oriented companies benefiting from large investments and often public funding reduce quality to extract undue profit, squeezing out service providers, who genuinely try to provide person-centred, quality care. These include public providers, service providers from the social economy, and care cooperatives.

- Encourage Member States to **support high quality care by recognising the importance of different care and support services, valuing the interest of viable not-for-profit alongside for-profit providers**.

We reiterate our proposal for a European Long-Term Care Platform as part of the revised Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights to give this policy a tangible framework of monitoring and transparency, with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations. The Platform should have an annual meeting similar to the Long-Term Care Forum organised on 12 November 2024 by the Commission.

With this in mind, we stand ready to support the new European Commission in its efforts to meet the needs of over 30 million people in Europe requiring long-term care due to age, disability, or illness, as well as their employees, service providers and families.

List of Signatories

AGE Platform Europe
Alzheimer Europe
Autism-Europe

Caritas Europa
CECOP – European confederation of industrial and service cooperatives
CESI – European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions
COFACE Families Europe
EAPN – European Anti-Poverty Network
EFFAT – European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism Sectors
EFFE – European Federation for Family Employment & Home Care
Eurocarers
Eurodiaconia
EuroHealthNet
European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD)
European Disability Forum
European Federation for Services to Individuals
Make Mothers Matter
Mental Health Europe
PICUM – Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
UNI Europa Global Union

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Expanding to new priorities, not forgetting the old ones

AGE Platform Europe's contribution to the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034.

Brussels, 06/05/2025

As a member organisation, AGE supports the position of Social Platform and the European Anti-Poverty Network on the MFF, and has co-signed an joint letter by European Civic Forum for strengthening and shielding European democracy with the upcoming MFF.

General suggestions on the next MFF

The current budgetary framework of the European Union is approaching its end in 2027, and it has been arguably facing the deepest crises that a European budgets have faced: On top of the immediate need for action to prevent climate change and mitigate its impact, the digitalization of the EU economy and long-lasting structural differences in the social and economic opportunities of the EU's regions, it had to be adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic, its health and economic impact, the 2022 Russian aggression against Ukraine and its impact on energy security and inflation in Europe, as well as a revolution in the EU's stance in the world, now able to fund military assistance to its neighbour country defending itself from invasion. Now, a further crisis looms with the trade war unleashed by the new US administration and the defunding of vital international assistance programmes in the world and in the EU's immediate neighbourhood.

The EU budget has so far proven to be able to change and to adapt, all while not forgetting about its important priorities. It has continued to fund civil society at European level and across the EU, allowing population groups to speak up and to convey their experiences and demands to decisionmakers at EU level. For example, national governments via the EU have heavily invested in health prevention and health systems after the reckoning that a decade of austerity had reduced its power to stem a global pandemic, such as COVID-19.

However, more efforts are needed. For instance, demographic change as a long-term process creates pressure on public policies, attitudes and funds to change. The European budget should also keep this in account.

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In the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework, AGE Platform Europe has several suggestions to put forward:

- **To be future-proof, the next Multiannual Financial Framework should take into account and mainstream the work on ageing and demographic change**, following the guidance of UNECE and WHO for example. This should take the form of investing into research projects that can make dignified, healthy and active ageing a reality for a great number of older Europeans; of support to civil society organisations which formulate the needs of an ageing European population; support to employers and trade unions to uphold employment opportunities as workforce shortages meet an ageing workforce; invest in high-quality, accessible and affordable long-term care which upholds independence and autonomy and supports informal carers; invest in health promotion and prevention; train Europeans of all ages to give them access to the advancement of technologies, and encourage the creation and support for accessible, age-friendly environments.

Relevant recommendations from Social Platform which AGE supports:

- Recommendation 1: the size of the post-2027 MFF must be larger than the current MFF and NextGenerationEU together
- Recommendation 3: Keep both horizontal and thematic enabling conditions in the Common Provisions Regulation to ensure accountability and delivery on investments linked to the European Pillar of Social Rights

- **Funding for civil society organisations and citizens' projects should be maintained and further simplified**. Underrepresented groups of every age such as Roma, persons from national minority or migration background, persons with diverse sexual orientations, persons with disabilities, persons experiencing poverty and social exclusion, homeless people, informal carers, persons suffering from various common or less common diseases or conditions and many more would not be able to raise their voice in the technical and abstract world of European policy-making, unless supported The European funds, and in particular the Citizen, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV), Erasmus+, as well as the European Social Fund Plus provide a vital support for them to organise, be informed about EU-level discussion and be able to formulate their input and suggestions into the democratic process of European lawmaking. **It is vital that this capacity of the EU budget is maintained, with all legitimate demands for transparency on what it is spent on. AGE warns of the temptation to impose cumbersome reporting**

requirements which would exclude organisations with lesser administrative capacity to benefit from EU funding.

- **A European spirit can only thrive from the lived and real experience of its citizens and residents with the entity 'Europe'**. These are captured thanks to cross-border education and training programmes such as Erasmus Plus, as well as to the European Social Fund Plus, and to the Cohesion Programmes. Europe can make use of its citizens' skills and resources also via the cascade funding and the financial support to third parties (e.g. under Horizon Europe and CERV - Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programmes), co-financing grassroots small-scale projects with tangible and visible impact. Such initiatives create interest and understanding for the EU and its policies and allow citizens to feel part of a larger European community of values, social inclusion, remembrance and experience. Therefore, these programmes should be maintained, as well as the possibility of people to participate in them – especially those who have the least means themselves to engage in European mobility.
- **Transparency and visibility of the impact of the European budget** to citizens is important for citizens to see it as a common project. Therefore, we support initiatives to make the new MFF more transparent in its impact on different groups of citizens, such as based on gender, age groups, disability or other criteria.

Below, we detail the different recommendations for the programmes as they exist currently, considering that different funding lines can move and be renamed in the next MFF.

Citizens, Rights, Equality and Values Programme: supporting active citizenship, values and remembrance along the lifespan

Civil society brings a vital contribution to European discourse and democracy, if it receives support and recognition. Across the continent, people of all ages provide small and big services to their communities and their families, self-

organise, take part in democratic decision-making as active citizens, are a living testament of European history and values and thus create the greatest treasure of the European Union, its citizens. Yet, an active, transparent and lively civil society needs support to be plural, informed and vocal. Funding civil society means to sustain democracy, to build capacity, to provide for the logistics and professionals directly supporting citizens and their organisations. This is true at local, regional and national level, and even more on European level.

Relevant recommendations from Social Platform which AGE supports:

- Recommendation 9: The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) must be retained as a stand-alone fund supporting a vibrant civil society, supporting, defending and promoting human rights

Relevant Joint Letter:

- Strengthen and shield European democracy with the upcoming MFF

Older persons' organisations in particular face various challenges:

- **Lack of funding**, both from governments and private philanthropy, which often prefers directing funds to more visible initiatives. This constitutes a form of structural ageism: despite age-related discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes being among the most pervasive and socially accepted forms of discrimination, funds are rather oriented to other causes, thus further normalizing ageism and contributing to its invisibility. Despite the huge impact which could be possible through funding, it is not yet widely available as funders may associate ageing with negative stereotypes and conditions, such as loneliness, physical and mental decline, financial hardship, loss of status and community, which are less appealing to funders.
- **Language barriers**: contrary to many younger citizens having grown up in a re-united Europe which supports the learning of foreign languages and an increasing mastery of the EU's most widespread second language – English – older generations, in particular the oldest old, have not had the chance to learn it, creating an important barrier for exchange and the creation of a common approach to a European polity.
- **Digital exclusion**: Many older people have either not worked with information technologies during their working lives or do not have equal access to training to keep up to date with the necessary knowledge and skills. Even though technologies such as automatic translations, collaborative online documents and online meetings exist, many older persons are excluded from using such tools. On top of the needed skills to navigate them, the cost of modern equipment and reliability of digital

connections is still an issue and barrier to a pan-European digital sphere for all citizens.

- **Mobility and accessibility barriers:** despite the EU's high standards in the accessibility of transport and the digital sphere, health and mobility issues make it still complicated for many older persons to engage in mobility and exchange physically in citizen's networks across Europe.

Such systemic limitations confirm the necessity to sustain civil society with EU-level funding to effectively tackle the above-mentioned challenges across the EU. It is moreover key to sustain networks that can support, aggregate and represent the voices of older persons and their organisations at European and international level. The CERV programme and its successor should therefore have **an explicit reference to combating age-based discrimination, in line with the EU treaties, alongside all other grounds of discrimination mentioned in the treaties**. It also remains vital for them to be encouraged to **explore the instances of intersectional discrimination**, such as older women or older persons with migrant background are facing. Funded citizen networks, on age and other grounds, **should be able to continue to adequately organise physical travel and meetings** that enlarge the number of citizens who are able to directly participate in the EU's policy discussions. The barriers outlined above also command that significant resources should be directed towards **interpretation and translation, including services delivered by trained professionals** rather than artificial intelligence which risks being biased and ageist.

The current fund recognises the value of work of volunteers, without which these citizen networks would not be able to function: this recognition should be maintained and expanded to include the efforts contributed to organisations without any paid staff, as a form of in-kind co-funding.

AGE and its member organisations highly value the opportunity to re-grant parts of the Operational Grant provided through CERV to smaller, national projects (the so-called **financial support to third parties**). This innovation of the current MFF has allowed to EU funds to have a direct impact and visibility at grassroots level, bring Europe closer to its citizens. Thanks to such cascade funding (implemented nationally and locally, while being steered at European level), information and actions happened along the whole chains and governance levels, empowering every single actor, providing them with direct responsibility and sense of agency, being it for the organization of awareness-raising at local and national levels, of meetings and conferences of citizens' organisations with national and European decision-makers, or for any other initiative where support is provided, being carefully monitored and geared to deliver results and impact

However, even with this possibility, it is often rather the organisations organised more professionally and better funded who have the capacity to apply, deliver and report on the regranting projects.

AGE calls for maintaining the financial support to third parties (regranting). However, it should be noticed that the requirement to bring in 20% of co-funding to regranted projects creates a significant barrier to inclusion and outreach, as the financial support thus benefits mostly to the richest organizations This requirement should be reduced or abandoned. At the very least, it should be harmonised across the same programme, as CERV-DAPNE and CERV-LITI require only 10% of co-funding, while CERV-Operational Grants (and financial support to third parties) require 20%.

AGE emphasises that the role of civil society organisations is to independently aggregate and convey the voice of their constituents and warns against including any requirement to adopt certain political positions in the work of funded civil society organisations, and to put in limitations such as not contacting public officials with positions representing the legitimate point of view of groups of citizens. However, it should be ensured that all funded civil society organisations share an active commitment to the EU's values enshrined in the Treaties.

European Social Fund Plus: empower people to remain in the labour market, support a life-long learning culture and inclusive society

Demographic ageing has a profound impact on the world of work and social policies should adapt to provide responses to the challenges created by this evolution. The European Social Fund plays a key role in supporting underrepresented groups, such as people of all ages experimenting poverty, to be heard in the EU's processes and to foster the social innovation, the creation and exchange on good practices and their upscaling. An important part of this is the creation of exchange platforms, similar to the past Transnational networks of ESF managing authorities and civil society to further develop experience and learning on social policies.

Relevant recommendations from Social Platform which AGE supports:

- Recommendation 4: The European Social Fund+ (ESF+) must be retained as a stand-alone fund supporting social inclusion
- Recommendation 5: The earmarking for social inclusion under ESF+ should go beyond the current 25% for all Member States

- The next ESF+ should **re-establish a specific objective to foster the employment of older workers** through

innovative practices and projects, support and advice to employers, person-centred job search initiatives, and re-skilling and upskilling that target also this demography. One in five persons between 55 and 64 are not in employment, and particularly women of this age group are excluded from the labour market for various reasons, while a more supportive labour market could help them in finding new employment and not forego the last important years of labour income and pension contributions. **Initiatives should also focus on retention of older people in employment**, such as through career guidance, age management, adapting working conditions and supporting informal carers. **Focus on specific sectors such as live-in carers, health and care professionals can be instrumental** to improve gender equality, support quality care services which enable older persons to stay included, and improve working conditions.

- The next ESF+ should **bring the implementation of the Employment Equality Directive to workplaces** by raising awareness about ageism through large-scale campaign and developing research on ageism in the workplace, fostering a new narrative on ageing and diversity at work, ensuring an intersectional approach reflecting the population diversity, developing disability and age-inclusive workplaces, guarantee older workers' access to their rights and are empowered to claim them and support rehabilitation and reintegration into the workplace after periods of absence from the labour market, such as in the case of disease, disability or informal care provision.
- The skills policies promoted by ESF+ should aim to address the **lack of opportunities and barriers to the participation of older people in education, training and life-long learning**. With currently only 19.2% of people 55-64 having participated in education or training over a 12-month period the reality is still far from the EPSR Action Plan objective of achieving 60%.
- The new ESF+ could have a **stronger intergenerational element**, such as by raising awareness on the added value of multigenerational teams, supporting mentorship schemes between older and younger workers and vice-versa, especially in times of a large share of workers being right before retirement age and in the context of the digital transition and the associated rapid change in work environments
- The next ESF+ should include **objectives to support informal carers** with support services, short-term care services, training, counselling and peer support to help them in their care duties, prevent physical and mental health issues linked to the informal care and the social isolation which often accompanies it and allow them to integrate care into their

working and private lives, and in fostering more flexible working conditions.

- The next **ESF+ should be open to develop and upscale practices to prevent social isolation and loneliness**, a phenomenon which people of all ages face – since the pandemic also increasingly young people. For older persons, feelings of loneliness are often harder to overcome because of mobility or health issues and a reduced social network, and therefore tend to have a severe impact on their mental and physical health. Intergenerational exchange or solidarity programmes as well as community support can bring an important contribution to preventing and addressing loneliness.

Erasmus Plus: support adult education, learning and mobility along the lifespan

Relevant recommendations from Social Platform which AGE supports:

- Recommendation 13: Increase funding for Erasmus+ fivefold to ensure accessibility for young people [and people of all ages – AGE addition]

Without doubt, Erasmus Plus is the most widely known and most successful programme of the European Union, funding not only student mobility, but also the European Solidarity Corps, exchanges and mutual learning at all levels of education, including non-formal adult education. Some older people's organisations have benefitted from Erasmus Plus to develop important trainings, apps, manuals or handbooks on activating talents of the oldest old, to combat ageism or to reimagine neighbourhoods. The existence of this programme therefore supports all generations and is a real lever to help older people to bring in and make visible their contributions to society.

Yet, it is complicated for smaller organisations to access these funds for various reasons such as bureaucracy, language issues, the lack of accessibility of the digital platform. Some Erasmus streams, such as on capacity-building, still require 20% co-funding, which further creates a barrier for smaller organisations.

- The new **Erasmus+ should continue to include a funding line for adult education, inherited from the former Grundtvig programme**, and be accessible to smaller organisations which have the capacity to work with ordinary citizens, making them also benefit from the spirit of European integration.

- The reintroduction of **mobility funding for adult learners** (and not only adult education staff) would have the potential to greatly expand the number of potential beneficiaries from the programme
- The programme should be **more accessible to smaller organisations** with lower co-funding requirements and tools for easier access.
- In line with Commissioner Micallef's mission to develop an Intergenerational Fairness Strategy, the next **Erasmus+ programme could also develop a specific action on promoting solidarity between generations**, a value founded in the EU's treaties. Erasmus+ projects could therefore receive an additional incentive to bring generations together and overcome barriers that have become higher since the pandemic and reinforced through the increasing move of social life into digital spaces.

EU4Health Programme: strengthen health promotion and prevention, address workforce shortages and service delivery

Relevant recommendations from Social Platform which AGE supports:

- Recommendation Ensure strong and sustained EU investment in health to build resilient and accessible healthcare systems. Propose a well-financed successor to EU4Health

The EU4Health programme was heavily upscaled after the pandemic, and rightly so because much of the impact of the pandemic could have been better mitigated, had the health sector not been underfunded over the 2010-2020 decade. This also concerned the EU's Health Programme which was downscaled in the current MFF, just to be transformed into EU4Health in 2021. This emphasises that it is inefficient to reduce spending in health; at the contrary, a healthier European population is economically more active, pays higher taxes and contributions, takes less time off to care for close relatives with health issues – health is one of the most efficient social investments.

- Beyond crisis preparedness, the next EU Health Programme should fully **embrace the mission to increase Healthy Life Years**, which have been stagnating for more than a decade.
- This means **directing more funding into health promotion and disease prevention**. While it is laudable to invest massively into 'Beating Cancer' **many more widespread diseases, from musculoskeletal to cardio-**

vascular and neurodegenerative, have an important impact on people's health as they age and weigh on their quality of life, chances to fully participate in society and on public and private budgets. Addressing them can help reduce mortality, increase healthy life years and alleviate public spending.

- In terms of research, funding should better explore the effects of **polymedication**, which older persons are facing to a higher degree than other groups and the **differences in symptoms, diseases and treatment and between older women and men.**
- In the context of ageing, there is a particular **shortage of health and care workforce.** Geriatricians, nurses, long-term care workers and specialists are lacking and there are territories without adequate coverage by general practitioners, let alone hospitals. A specific initiative of the next Health Programme should address these shortcomings.

Horizon Europe: research and innovation enabling longer, healthier and more active lives

The EU's research and innovation programme has a tremendous role to play in supporting innovation that can empower Europeans to lead healthier and more active lives, as well as promoting social inclusion, and has done so in the past. AGE has been active in various Horizon projects and can share experiences about the priorities and technicalities of the calls stemming from the programme

Relevant recommendations from Social Platform which AGE supports:

- Recommendation 6: Recognise the value of public investment in research beyond industrial competitiveness. The EU needs a successor to Horizon Europe that supports research in the areas of social inclusion and fundamental rights, with the aim of improving the wellbeing of its people.

- The predecessor programme, Horizon 2020, had a specific objective to increasing healthy life years of Europeans by two years. This gave rise to several ground-breaking research projects on age-friendly environments, prevention of diseases and other hazards in later life. **Fixing a visionary objective such as increasing healthy life years, or reducing the current gender gap of three years in the number of years spent in bad health, will help drive innovation in this sense.**
- Research can only make an impact if it is applicable. AGE promotes co-creation, co-design and the participation of citizens or end users in projects that are aiming to bring them an improvement, product or service. **The EU research programme should continue to include requirements for participative research in its clauses.**

- In the current context of climate, energy and housing crises, older people are among the most marginalised and disproportionately affected groups, with serious consequences on their health, standard of living and access to essential services necessary for a life in dignity. **It is therefore crucial that future Horizon funding takes into account the challenges faced by older people in today's environmental and geopolitical landscape, by allocating dedicated support for civil society participation – including that of older persons – in research programmes.**
- Planning is essential in research, alongside with ensuring a proper timeframe for implementation. If this is key for big organizations, it is equally true for smaller ones, whose participation can be further hindered by uncertainty on expected calls for proposals and by a limited frame for actions. **Longer and more predictable timelines** (such as fixed publication dates and extended deadlines, that also consider the inevitable challenging periods around festivities and summer holidays) **will deliver more quality and more impact, especially when researching.**

InvestEU/Recovery and Resilience Facility Investment for an ageing Europe

Relevant recommendations from Social Platform which AGE supports:

- Recommendation 3: Keep both horizontal and thematic enabling conditions in the Common Provisions Regulation to ensure accountability and delivery on investments linked to the European Pillar of Social Rights

While InvestEU was initially designed to support economic innovation and competitiveness, the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), NextGenerationEU and subsequent investment programmes (RepowerEU, …) also included important investment objectives regarding policies that directly affect citizens, such as increasing capacity of public health, a cleaner environment and mobility. However, stakeholder involvement proved difficult in the RRF and it remains unclear how certain EU policy objectives, such as deinstitutionalisaiton of persons with disabilities, were promoted in the relevant funding lines on long-term care and public health. The next investment programme should aim for high standards in terms of civil dialogue at EU, national and regional level.

Enabling conditions, civil society involvement in setting the priorities and delivering the projects under these funds should be strengthened. This will

also increase the visibility of where EU funds are going, all the more if they are funded by common European bonds and therefore spread an investment effort across several generations.

Funding for the green transition, resilience, climate change mitigation and adaptation

The EU has an important contribution to bring in steering our economic path towards one that respects our planets' capacities for regeneration and has taken decisive actions in this sense with NextGenerationEU, the Just Transition Fund and the Social Climate Fund.

For the acceptability of these policies it is crucial that citizens of all ages can feel that they can take part in this transition. On the labour market, this implies proactive skills policies that reach all generations of workers. In the investment in public infrastructure and the environment, efforts should be made to reach all generations, for instance:

- Older tenants are more likely to have been living in the same place for many years, without having benefitted from investments into energy efficiency. Public funding should encourage homeowners and social housing providers to **better invest in the environmental performance of their rented-out housing**.
- The same is true regarding the **energy performance of older homeowners' housing**. If European funds are used to encourage for insulation and energy efficiency in buildings, it should be made accessible to older persons, who often are excluded from receiving credit based on the assumption of a higher mortality risk for covering credit with life insurance. Both of these measures also have a positive impact on the vulnerability of older persons to heat waves and heat shocks.
- Older persons are one of the groups primarily affected by climate change. For instance, older people living in residential care are facing the **impact**

Relevant recommendations from Social Platform which AGE supports:

- Recommendation 7: A more comprehensive framework on Just Transition is needed with a broader geographical focus and strong social conditionalities. The focus of the Just Transition Fund should be expanded beyond employment to address the broader social needs of disadvantaged groups impacted by the green transition and align with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights
- Recommendation 8: Increase the Social Climate Fund budget. Ensure that 100% of revenues from ETS2 are allocated to the SCF and extend it beyond the year 2032, to effectively mitigate its social consequences.

of heat waves and may have a higher risk of being the associated health issues. These facilities should be prioritised in public insulation and energy efficiency policies. Similarly, public buildings such as libraries and administrations should be encouraged to propose 'cool spots' during hot periods and promote them among older persons to take a rest in a more comfortable climate as their homes.

- Investment into **improved public transport and climate-friendly forms of mobility** should take older persons into account and be fully accessible to persons with disabilities. EU funds should be targeted towards maintaining mobility in more sparsely populated regions, to ensure all can reach the necessary essential goods and services to live in dignity (health care, administration, shopping, venues to socialise and to participate in cultural activities etc.)
- Investment should further be **targeted on communities and environments which are more densely populated** to provide for age-friendly and accessible environments, sufficient green spaces and including places to get refreshed during hot days and warm during cold periods. These increase the resilience to the changing weather conditions, increase quality of life, and foster healthy and active lifestyles that are essential for healthy ageing.

Cohesion Fund: maintain dignifying living conditions in all of the EU's territories

The points outlined above specifically on climate change should also be encouraged via the EU's Cohesion Funding. In addition, **Cohesion funding should address the risk of digital exclusion and the depopulation of rural areas**. Indeed, as goods and service provision is increasingly moving online, small city centres, administration, healthcare providers and shops in more sparsely populated areas are shutting down, reinforcing a rural exodus which leaves mainly older people remaining in these areas. Cohesion Funding should implement the European promise of harmonised standards of living across the EU and therefore address this issue.

Relevant recommendations from Social Platform which AGE supports:

- Recommendation 2: Cohesion Policy must remain a key pillar of the MFF, and its partnership principle should be retained and reinforced.

About AGE Platform Europe

AGE Platform Europe is the largest European network of non-profit organizations of and for older people. We elevate older people's voices, bringing their experiences and aspirations to the table to celebrate aging and fight for equality at all ages.

More information: www.age-platform.eu

Contact: Philippe Seidel, Policy Manager for Social and Economic Policies, philippe.seidel@age-platform.eu

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Transparency Register ID: 16549972091-86

Contribution ID: dc3c990f-6311-495a-9eaf-b5c3dddabfd7
Date: 06/05/2025 17:40:42

Next MFF - EU funding for cross-border education, training and solidarity, youth, media, culture, and creative sectors, values, and civil society

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

The current multiannual financial framework – the EU's long-term budget – runs until the end of 2027. In 2025, the Commission will adopt comprehensive proposals for the post-2027 multiannual financial framework and for the next generation of programmes that will receive EU funding. These programmes provide financial support to a wide range of beneficiaries across the EU – including universities, regions, towns, civil society organisations, businesses, farmers, students, scientists, cultural stakeholders and many others.

Following the Political Guidelines of President von der Leyen for the 2024-2029 European Commission, the Commission will work together for a simpler, more focused and responsive long-term budget that reflects the EU's strategic priorities with the ambition to be an 'investment Commission'. The multiannual financial framework for the period after 2027 must reflect this.

The Commission's proposals will be designed to make it possible for the EU to deliver on the things that matter most, in areas where it can achieve more than Member States acting alone. This requires a careful assessment both of what has worked well in the past and what could be improved in the future. The next EU long-term budget will draw lessons from the current one – notably in terms of simplicity and flexibility, speed and strategic focus.

To gather evidence to support the preparation of these proposals, the Commission is launching a series of public consultations to gather views from all interested parties on how to make the very most of every euro of the EU budget.

To deliver on these objectives, this consultation covers funding in the following thematic areas: cross-border education, training and solidarity, youth, media, culture, and creative sectors, values (democracy, equality, rule of law, fundamental rights), and civil society. The decision to cluster issues serves to support the preparatory work and does not pre-empt the architecture of future programmes.

The questionnaire consists of three parts. Part 1 collects some information about you, while Part 2 contains question related to EU funds in this thematic area. Part 3 includes two closing questions.

It should take about 10 minutes to complete the survey. You can save your replies as a draft and finish them later. Please limit your additional comments on the questions with a free text box. You can upload a document stating your views at the end of the survey.

About you

* Language of my contribution

- ○ Bulgarian
- ○ Croatian
- ○ Czech
- ○ Danish
- ○ Dutch
- ◉ English
- ○ Estonian
- ○ Finnish
- ○ French
- ○ German
- ○ Greek
- ○ Hungarian
- ○ Irish
- ○ Italian
- ○ Latvian
- ○ Lithuanian
- ○ Maltese
- ○ Polish
- ○ Portuguese
- ○ Romanian
- ○ Slovak
- ○ Slovenian
- ○ Spanish
- ○ Swedish

* I am giving my contribution as

- ○ Academic/research institution
- ○ Business association
- ○ Company/business
- ○ Consumer organisation
- ○ EU citizen
- ○ Environmental organisation
- ○ Non-EU citizen
- ◉ Non-governmental organisation (NGO)

- ○ Public authority
- ○ Trade union
- ○ Other

* First name

Philippe

* Surname

SEIDEL Leroy

* Email (this won't be published)

philippe.seidel@age-platform.eu

* Organisation name

255 character(s) maximum

AGE Platform Europe

* Organisation size

- ○ Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- ◉ Small (10 to 49 employees)
- ○ Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- ○ Large (250 or more)

What is the main scope of your organisation?

- ☑ Citizens and citizen engagement
- ☐ Culture and creativity
- ☐ Audiovisual and media
- ☑ Democracy, citizenship rights and elections
- ☑ Education
- ☑ Vocational training
- ☑ Equality and non-discrimination
- ☑ Fight against racism and xenophobia, hate speech and hate crime, including online
- ☑ Fundamental rights / human rights (e.g. children's rights, women's rights, rights of persons with disabilities)

- [x] Combating gender-based violence, violence against children and violence against vulnerable groups
- [ ] Research and innovation
- [ ] Justice and rule of law
- [ ] Sport
- [x] Volunteering / solidarity
- [ ] Youth
- [ ] Artificial intelligence, data protection
- [ ] Other

Transparency register number

Check if your organisation is on the transparency register. It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

1654997291-086

* Country of origin

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

This list does not represent the official position of the European institutions with regard to the legal status or policy of the entities mentioned. It is a harmonisation of often divergent lists and practices.

○ Afghanistan	○ Djibouti	○ Libya	○ Saint Martin
○ Åland Islands	○ Dominica	○ Liechtenstein	○ Saint Pierre and Miquelon
○ Albania	○ Dominican Republic	○ Lithuania	○ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
○ Algeria	○ Ecuador	○ Luxembourg	○ Samoa
○ American Samoa	○ Egypt	○ Macau	○ San Marino
○ Andorra	○ El Salvador	○ Madagascar	○ São Tomé and Príncipe
○ Angola	○ Equatorial Guinea	○ Malawi	○ Saudi Arabia
○ Anguilla	○ Eritrea	○ Malaysia	○ Senegal
○ Antarctica	○ Estonia	○ Maldives	○ Serbia
○ Antigua and Barbuda	○ Eswatini	○ Mali	○ Seychelles
○ Argentina	○ Ethiopia	○ Malta	○ Sierra Leone
○ Armenia	○ Falkland Islands	○ Marshall Islands	○ Singapore

- Aruba
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Belize
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Bonaire Saint Eustatius and Saba
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Bouvet Island
- Brazil
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Brunei
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Faroe Islands
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- French Guiana
- French Polynesia
- French Southern and Antarctic Lands
- Gabon
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Greenland
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Guam
- Guatemala
- Guernsey
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Heard Island and McDonald Islands
- Honduras
- Martinique
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Montserrat
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar/Burma
- Namibia
- Nauru
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Niue
- Norfolk Island
- Sint Maarten
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
- South Korea
- South Sudan
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- The Gambia
- Timor-Leste
- Togo
- Tokelau

- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Cape Verde
- Cayman Islands
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- China
- Christmas Island
- Clipperton
- Cocos (Keeling) Islands
- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo
- Cook Islands
- Costa Rica
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Croatia
- Cuba
- Curaçao
- Cyprus
- Czechia
- Hong Kong
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Israel
- Italy
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Jersey
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kiribati
- Kosovo
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Laos
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Northern Mariana Islands
- North Korea
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Palestine
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Philippines
- Pitcairn Islands
- Poland
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- Qatar
- Réunion
- Romania
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- Rwanda
- Saint Barthélemy
- Saint Helena Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
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- Turkmenistan
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- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States
- United States Minor Outlying Islands
- Uruguay
- US Virgin Islands
- Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu
- Vatican City
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Wallis and Futuna
- Western Sahara
- Yemen
- Zambia

- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Denmark
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Zimbabwe

The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. **For the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, 'business association, 'consumer association', 'EU citizen') country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published.** Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

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- **Anonymous**
  Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.
- **Public**
  Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

☑ I agree with the personal data protection provisions

Thematic questions

In this section, the Commission has identified some policy priorities in the areas of cross-border education, training and solidarity, youth, media, culture, creative sectors, values (democracy, equality, rule of law, fundamental rights), and civil society. This list is by no means exhaustive. Feel free to use the free text box to elaborate on aspects that you think are missing.

Do you have experience with one or more of the following funds and programmes?

- ☑ Erasmus+

- [ ] European Solidarity Corps
- [ ] Creative Europe
- [x] Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme
- [ ] Justice programme
- [x] European Social Fund+
- [x] Horizon Europe
- [ ] Recovery and Resilience Facility
- [ ] Other, please specify:

How important are these policy priorities to you?

	Very important	Important	Moderately important	Not at all important	Don't know/not applicable
Support study/training abroad in education and training, youth and sport, and mobility of researchers	◉	○	○	○	○
Strengthen cross-border cooperation between schools, universities, training providers, businesses, and research institutions	○	◉	○	○	○
Boost basic skills development	◉	○	○	○	○
Improve science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills and competences	○	◉	○	○	○
Address skills shortages and match skills to labour market needs	◉	○	○	○	○
Support teachers to improve quality and innovation in education and training	◉	○	○	○	○
Support entrepreneurship and the creative economy	◉	○	○	○	○
Support upskilling and reskilling, particularly digital and green skills and competences	◉	○	○	○	○
Promote inclusion in cross-border education and training	◉	○	○	○	○

Support recognition of degrees and qualifications across the EU and periods spent abroad for learning mobility	○	◉	○	○	○
Support to upscale – at national and EU level – the results of EU cooperation in skills, education and training	○	◉	○	○	○
Strengthen cooperation with non-EU countries (especially candidate countries) in education, training, youth, culture and sport	◉	○	○	○	○
Promote grassroots sport and physical activity, and sport as a tool for social inclusion and equality	○	◉	○	○	○
Make it easier to get young people into work or training, especially those in vulnerable situations	◉	○	○	○	○
Support youth volunteering	○	◉	○	○	○
Strengthen intergenerational solidarity	◉	○	○	○	○
Ensure widespread access to culture and cultural heritage	○	◉	○	○	○
Support mobility of artists and culture professionals	○	○	◉	○	○
Promote and preserve cultural heritage and European remembrance	◉	○	○	○	○
Promote cultural and linguistic diversity	○	◉	○	○	○
Promote media independence and media pluralism, fight disinformation	◉	○	○	○	○
Support the viability and resilience of the audiovisual and media sectors	○	◉	○	○	○
Promote entrepreneurship, access to market and scaling-up for small businesses in the creative sectors	○	○	◉	○	○
Improve people's access to quality media content	◉	○	○	○	○

Support the EU media regulatory framework	◉	○	○	○	○
Empower citizens, strengthen democratic engagement and participation, including from young people and children	◉	○	○	○	○
Promote a shared European identity	◉	○	○	○	○
Protect democracy and promote democratic standards	◉	○	○	○	○
Uphold and promote the rule of law	◉	○	○	○	○
Promote trustworthy artificial intelligence that respects EU values	◉	○	○	○	○
Build an EU area of justice, promote judicial training, judicial cooperation and access to justice	○	◉	○	○	○
Promote equality and non-discrimination (on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation)	◉	○	○	○	○
Combat racism and xenophobia, LGBTIQ-phobia or other forms of intolerance, and fight hate speech and hate crime (including online)	◉	○	○	○	○
Combat gender-based violence, violence against children and other groups at risk	◉	○	○	○	○
Support civic space and capacity building of civil society organisations	◉	○	○	○	○
Uphold and promote respect of fundamental/human rights (including children's rights, women' s rights, and rights of persons with disabilities), including online	◉	○	○	○	○
The effective protection of EU funds against fraud, corruption and other illegal activity	◉	○	○	○	○
Other (please specify below)	◉	○	○	○	○

If you have identified other policy priorities, please specify:

200 character(s) maximum

Combat ageism and promote a positive image of ageing, promote participation in training and education of older persons

To what extent would EU funding provide added value to address these policy priorities compared to funding at national, local or regional level?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Support study/training abroad in education and training, youth and sport, and mobility of researchers	◉	○	○	○	○
Strengthen cross-border cooperation between schools, universities, training providers, businesses, and research institutions	◉	○	○	○	○
Boost basic skills development	◉	○	○	○	○
Improve science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills and competences	○	◉	○	○	○
Address skills shortages and match skills to labour market needs	◉	○	○	○	○
Support teachers to improve quality and innovation in education and training	○	◉	○	○	○
Support entrepreneurship and the creative economy	○	◉	○	○	○
Support upskilling and reskilling, particularly digital and green skills and competences	◉	○	○	○	○
Promote inclusion in cross-border education and training	◉	○	○	○	○
Support recognition of degrees and qualifications across the EU and periods spent abroad for learning mobility	◉	○	○	○	○
Support to upscale – at national and EU level – the results of EU cooperation in skills, education and training	◉	○	○	○	○
Strengthen cooperation with non-EU countries (especially candidate countries) in education, training, youth, culture and sport	○	◉	○	○	○
Promote grassroots sport and physical activity, and sport as a tool for social inclusion and equality	○	◉	○	○	○

Make it easier to get young people into work or training, especially those in vulnerable situations	○	◉	○	○	○
Support youth volunteering	◉	○	○	○	○
Strengthen intergenerational solidarity	◉	○	○	○	○
Ensure widespread access to culture and cultural heritage	◉	○	○	○	○
Support mobility of artists and culture professionals	○	◉	○	○	○
Promote and preserve cultural heritage and European remembrance	◉	○	○	○	○
Promote cultural and linguistic diversity	◉	○	○	○	○
Promote media independence and media pluralism, fight disinformation	◉	○	○	○	○
Support the viability and resilience of the audiovisual and media sectors	○	◉	○	○	○
Promote entrepreneurship, access to market and scaling-up for small businesses in the creative sectors	○	◉	○	○	○
Improve people's access to quality media content	◉	○	○	○	○
Support the EU media regulatory framework	◉	○	○	○	○
Empower citizens, strengthen democratic engagement and participation, including from young people and children	○	◉	○	○	○
Promote a shared European identity	◉	○	○	○	○
Protect democracy and promote democratic standards	◉	○	○	○	○
Uphold and promote the rule of law	◉	○	○	○	○
Promote trustworthy artificial intelligence that respects EU values	◉	○	○	○	○
Build an EU area of justice, promote judicial training, judicial cooperation and access to justice	◉	○	○	○	○
Promote equality and non-discrimination (on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation)	◉	○	○	○	○
Combat racism and xenophobia, LGBTIQ-phobia or other forms of intolerance, and fight hate speech and hate crime (including online)	◉	○	○	○	○

Combat gender-based violence, violence against children and other groups at risk	◉	○	○	○	○
Support civic space and capacity building of civil society organisations	◉	○	○	○	○
Uphold and promote respect of fundamental /human rights (including children's rights, women' s rights, and rights of persons with disabilities), including online	◉	○	○	○	○
The effective protection of EU funds against fraud, corruption and other illegal activity	◉	○	○	○	○

To what extent do you consider that the following actions for cooperation and mobility in the area of education, training and solidarity would bring about a positive impact in the future?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Mobility for schools and learners	◉	○	○	○	○
Mobility for higher education students and staff	◉	○	○	○	○
Mobility for vocational education and training (VET) learners and staff	◉	○	○	○	○
Mobility for adult education learners and staff	◉	○	○	○	○
Mobility in sport	○	◉	○	○	○
Virtual exchanges in higher education and youth	○	◉	○	○	○
Capacity building in vocational education and training, youth, sport and higher education	◉	○	○	○	○
Professional development of teachers	◉	○	○	○	○
Alliances of European Universities	○	◉	○	○	○
Centres of vocational Excellence	◉	○	○	○	○
Mobility in the field of higher education	◉	○	○	○	○
Language learning opportunities	◉	○	○	○	○
Cooperation partnerships in education and training	◉	○	○	○	○
Joint Masters degrees	◉	○	○	○	○
European degree	◉	○	○	○	○

European degree for vocational education and training	◉	○	○	○	○
Skills academies	○	◉	○	○	○
Support the uptake of curricula developed by skills academies	○	◉	○	○	○
European Student Card	◉	○	○	○	○
Digitalisation of degrees and training certificates	◉	○	○	○	○
Volunteering activities and solidarity projects	◉	○	○	○	○

To what extent do you consider that the following EU actions in the areas of culture, creative sectors and media would bring about a positive impact in the future?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
European cooperation projects involving cultural and creative organisations from different countries	◉	○	○	○	○
European platforms for the promotion of emerging artists	○	◉	○	○	○
Pan-European networks of culture and creative organisations	○	◉	○	○	○
Circulation of European literary works	○	◉	○	○	○
Mobility for artists and professionals	◉	○	○	○	○
Pan-European cultural entities such as orchestras / other forms of cooperation with a large geographical reach	○	◉	○	○	○
Cross-border collaboration in media content creation, development and production	◉	○	○	○	○
Cross-border cooperation and business support to cultural and creative sectors	◉	○	○	○	○
Innovative media tools and business models, and talent development	○	◉	○	○	○
European distribution, promotion and circulation of EU content, and audience development	◉	○	○	○	○
Support to media independence and the news media sectors	◉	○	○	○	○

Support to media literacy	◉	○	○	○	○
Support to public debate, citizens' access to quality content and actions tackling disinformation	◉	○	○	○	○

To what extent do you consider that the following actions for values (democracy, equality, rule of law, fundamental rights) and civil society would bring about a positive impact in the future?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Capacity building and training/train-the-trainer activities	◉	○	○	○	○
Dissemination and awareness-raising activities	◉	○	○	○	○
Supporting cross-border mutual learning, exchange of good practices and cooperation, coalition building	◉	○	○	○	○
Analytical activities such as data recording, data collection, analysis, studies, surveys	◉	○	○	○	○
Design, development and implementation of guidelines, strategies, manuals, toolkits, working methods, etc. for the practical application of EU policies	◉	○	○	○	○
Supporting the creation and development of EU-level networks and organisations	◉	○	○	○	○
Supporting local/grassroots civil society organisations that protect rights and promote EU values	◉	○	○	○	○
Cross-border mutual learning possibilities in the justice area	◉	○	○	○	○

To what extent do you see the following as obstacles that prevent the EU budget from fully delivering on its objectives in these policy areas?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Too many programmes with overlapping policy goals	○	○	◉	○	○
Different and often complex fund-specific rules for access to funding and compliance	◉	○	○	○	○

Administrative burden for beneficiaries	◉	○	○	○	○
Limited reach to relevant/different/more diverse target groups	○	◉	○	○	○
Lack of flexibility to adapt to new and unforeseen developments	○	◉	○	○	○
Lack of consistency and effectiveness to deliver on EU policy priorities	○	◉	○	○	○
Insufficient alignment with national policies	○	○	◉	○	○
Insufficient focus on projects with the highest EU added value	○	○	◉	○	○
Fraud, corruption and other illegal activities targeting EU funds	○	◉	○	○	○
Other (please specify below)	◉	○	○	○	○

If you have identified other obstacles, please specify:

200 character(s) maximum

Lack of visibility of the EU funds to the public, limited use of project results by EU services.

To what extent do you agree that the following options could help the EU budget become more effective and efficient?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Applying common rules, timelines and eligibility criteria to all relevant EU funds	○	◉	○	○	○
Reduce the number of funding programmes	○	○	◉	○	○
Introduce more flexibility into resource allocation to react to crises and emerging needs	○	◉	○	○	○
Simplify access to funding for beneficiaries	◉	○	○	○	○
Prioritise projects with high EU added value, such as multi-country projects and projects that contribute to the EU's strategic priorities	◉	○	○	○	○
Place greater focus on achieving results, including via performance-based funding (such as financing not linked to costs)	○	○	◉	○	○
Use funds to promote both reforms and investments	○	◉	○	○	○

Better preventing and combatting fraud, corruption and other illegal activities targeting EU funds	○	◉	○	○	○
Other (please specify below)	◉	○	○	○	○

If you have identified other ways to make the EU budget more effective, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

Simplify the access to EU funds for small-scale organisations end projects (Erasmus+, CERV regranting), reduce cofunding requirements for not-for-profit entities as this is a major barrier to access funds

Closing section

A summary of the results of this consultation will be published on the consultation webpage just after it has closed.

If you would like to add further information – within the scope of this questionnaire – please feel free to do so here.

500 character(s) maximum

EU funds are vital to establish an EU-level representation of various citizens' groups and must be safeguarded from attacks both on their volume and on the political orientation of democratic representative organisations.

If you wish to attach any relevant documents to support your replies, please feel free to do so here.

Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed

e488cdc5-96db-474f-a25a-13bfddd06447/AGE_contribution_to_MFF_-_Expanding_to_new_priorities.pdf

Contact

SG-MFF-PUBLIC-CONSULTATIONS@ec.europa.eu

Contribution ID: 24c437fd-1b72-474b-92ba-8f5896fa06fc
Date: 07/05/2025 11:51:58

Public consultation on the next MFF: Implementing EU funding with Member States and regions

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

The current multiannual financial framework (MFF) – the EU's long-term budget – runs until the end of 2027. In 2025, the Commission will adopt comprehensive proposals for the post-2027 multiannual financial framework and for the next generation of funding programmes. These programmes provide financial support to a wide range of beneficiaries across the EU - including universities, regions, towns, civil society organisations, businesses, farmers, students, scientists and many others.

Following President von der Leyen's Political Guidelines for the 2024-2029 European Commission, the Commission will work together for a simpler, more focused and responsive long-term budget that reflects the European strategic priorities with the ambition to be an 'Investment Commission', while moving towards. The next long-term budget will be simpler in the way it works – with fewer programmes and a plan for each country linking key reforms with investment, and focusing on our joint priorities, including promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion. The multiannual financial framework for the period after 2027 must reflect this.

The Commission's proposals will be designed to make it possible for the EU to deliver on the things that matter most, in areas where it can achieve more than Member States acting alone. This requires a careful assessment both of what has worked well in the past and what could be improved in the future. The next EU long-term budget will draw lessons from the current one – notably in terms of simplicity and flexibility, speed and strategic focus.

To gather evidence to support the preparation of these proposals, the Commission is launching a series of public consultations to gather views from all interested parties on how to make the very most of every euro of the EU budget.

To deliver on these objectives, this consultation covers EU funding implemented with Members States and regions in the following policy areas: cohesion policy, common agricultural policy, fisheries and maritime policies, home affairs and Trans-European Networks. The decision to cluster issues serves to support the preparatory work and does not pre-empt the architecture of future programmes.

This questionnaire consists of three parts. Part 1 collects some information about you, while Part 2 contains questions related to the EU funds. Section 3 contains two closing questions.

It should take about 9 minutes to complete the survey. You can save your replies as a draft and finish them later. Please be concise when providing additional comments on the questions with a free text box. You can upload a document stating your views at the end of the survey.

Part 1

About you

* Language of my contribution

- ○ Bulgarian
- ○ Croatian
- ○ Czech
- ○ Danish
- ○ Dutch
- ◉ English
- ○ Estonian
- ○ Finnish
- ○ French
- ○ German
- ○ Greek

- ○ Hungarian
- ○ Irish
- ○ Italian
- ○ Latvian
- ○ Lithuanian
- ○ Maltese
- ○ Polish
- ○ Portuguese
- ○ Romanian
- ○ Slovak
- ○ Slovenian
- ○ Spanish
- ○ Swedish

* I am giving my contribution as

- ○ Academic/research institution
- ○ Business association
- ○ Company/business
- ○ Consumer organisation
- ○ EU citizen
- ○ Environmental organisation
- ○ Non-EU citizen
- ◉ Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- ○ Public authority
- ○ Trade union
- ○ Other

* First name

Philippe

* Surname

SEIDEL Leroy

* Email (this won't be published)

philippe.seidel@age-platform.eu

* Organisation name

255 character(s) maximum

AGE Platform Europe

* Organisation size

- (○) Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- (●) Small (10 to 49 employees)
- (○) Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- (○) Large (250 or more)

Transparency register number

Check if your organisation is on the transparency register. It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

16549972910-86

* Country of origin

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

This list does not represent the official position of the European institutions with regard to the legal status or policy of the entities mentioned. It is a harmonisation of often divergent lists and practices.

- (○) Afghanistan
- (○) Åland Islands
- (○) Albania
- (○) Algeria
- (○) American Samoa
- (○) Andorra
- (○) Angola
- (○) Anguilla
- (○) Antarctica
- (○) Antigua and Barbuda
- (○) Argentina
- (○) Armenia
- (○) Djibouti
- (○) Dominica
- (○) Dominican Republic
- (○) Ecuador
- (○) Egypt
- (○) El Salvador
- (○) Equatorial Guinea
- (○) Eritrea
- (○) Estonia
- (○) Eswatini
- (○) Ethiopia
- (○) Falkland Islands
- (○) Libya
- (○) Liechtenstein
- (○) Lithuania
- (○) Luxembourg
- (○) Macau
- (○) Madagascar
- (○) Malawi
- (○) Malaysia
- (○) Maldives
- (○) Mali
- (○) Malta
- (○) Marshall Islands
- (○) Saint Martin
- (○) Saint Pierre and Miquelon
- (○) Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- (○) Samoa
- (○) San Marino
- (○) São Tomé and Príncipe
- (○) Saudi Arabia
- (○) Senegal
- (○) Serbia
- (○) Seychelles
- (○) Sierra Leone
- (○) Singapore

- Aruba
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- (•) Belgium
- Belize
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Bonaire Saint Eustatius and Saba
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Bouvet Island
- Brazil
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Brunei
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Faroe Islands
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- French Guiana
- French Polynesia
- French Southern and Antarctic Lands
- Gabon
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Greenland
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Guam
- Guatemala
- Guernsey
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Heard Island and McDonald Islands
- Honduras
- Martinique
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Montserrat
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar/Burma
- Namibia
- Nauru
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Niue
- Norfolk Island
- Sint Maarten
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
- South Korea
- South Sudan
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- The Gambia
- Timor-Leste
- Togo
- Tokelau

- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Cape Verde
- Cayman Islands
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- China
- Christmas Island
- Clipperton
- Cocos (Keeling) Islands
- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo
- Cook Islands
- Costa Rica
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Croatia
- Cuba
- Curaçao
- Cyprus
- Czechia
- Hong Kong
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Israel
- Italy
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Jersey
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kiribati
- Kosovo
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Laos
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Northern Mariana Islands
- North Korea
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Palestine
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Philippines
- Pitcairn Islands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Réunion
- Romania
- Russia
- Rwanda
- Saint Barthélemy
- Saint Helena Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Türkiye
- Turkmenistan
- Turks and Caicos Islands
- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States
- United States Minor Outlying Islands
- Uruguay
- US Virgin Islands
- Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu
- Vatican City
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Wallis and Futuna
- Western Sahara
- Yemen
- Zambia

- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Denmark
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Zimbabwe

The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. **For the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, 'business association, 'consumer association', 'EU citizen') country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published.** Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

* **Contribution publication privacy settings**

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

- **Anonymous**
  Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.
- **Public**
  Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

☑ I agree with the personal data protection provisions

Part 2 - Questions related to EU funds implemented with Member States and regions

How important are the following policy challenges to you?

	Very important	Important	Moderately important	Not at all important	Don't know/not applicable

Limited public investment capacities to meet the needs of EU priorities (e.g. green and digital transitions, security, competitiveness)	◉	○	○	○	○
Persisting social, economic, regional and territorial disparities	◉	○	○	○	○
Limited capacity of regions and communities to benefit from the single market and new economic opportunities	◉	○	○	○	○
Demographic challenges	◉	○	○	○	○
Labour and skills shortages, need for upskilling and reskilling, and unpreparedness of education and training systems for the 21st century	◉	○	○	○	○
Decline in labour productivity and competitiveness	◉	○	○	○	○
Lack of progress in addressing poverty and social exclusion	◉	○	○	○	○
Barriers to the access to essential services, health, quality care, housing and social protection	◉	○	○	○	○
Digitalisation of the public administration, including public services and the justice systems	○	◉	○	○	○
Digital transformation in key sectors	○	◉	○	○	○
Lack of connectivity in Member States and regions (e.g. transport, energy and digital)	◉	○	○	○	○
Challenges related to the respect of the rule of law (e.g. independence of the judiciary, right to a fair trial, fight against corruption)	◉	○	○	○	○
Challenges related to the effective protection of EU funds against fraud, corruption and other illegal activity	◉	○	○	○	○

Security threats such as organised crime	○	◉	○	○	○
Challenges related to ensuring a complete and fully functioning Schengen area with the free movement of people	◉	○	○	○	○
Challenges related to migration and asylum management	○	◉	○	○	○
Increasing impacts of climate change and environmental degradation (e.g. natural disasters, loss of biodiversity)	◉	○	○	○	○
Decarbonising the economy	◉	○	○	○	○
Securing an affordable, sustainable and secure energy supply	◉	○	○	○	○
Maximising the potential of the circular economy	◉	○	○	○	○
Securing a stable supply of high-quality food at all times at reasonable prices	◉	○	○	○	○
Economic disparities and crises faced by the agricultural and fishery sectors	◉	○	○	○	○
Struggling cultural and creative sectors, precarity of artists, limited access to culture and preservation of heritage	◉	○	○	○	○
Other (please specify below)	◉	○	○	○	○

If you have identified other policy challenges or would like to elaborate on the challenges above, please specify (mentioning the policy area to which you refer in the latter case):

500 character(s) maximum

Developing home care and community-based care which maintains independence, age-friendly and accessible environments, sustaining quality of life in depopulating areas, integrating and maintaining older workers in the labour market, support citizens' and community organisations, invest in health promotion and prevention, protecting citizens of all ages from the impacts of climate change and natural disasters, maintaining high-quality and accessible public transport in underserved areas.

To what extent do you consider the following factors as obstacles to the EU budget achieving its objectives?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/ not applicable
Too many funds with overlapping objectives	○	◉	○	○	○
Different and often complex fund-specific rules on access to funding and compliance	◉	○	○	○	○
Administrative capacity at national, regional and local level	○	◉	○	○	○
Administrative burden for beneficiaries, regional and national authorities	◉	○	○	○	○
Overly complicated governance and distribution of funds	◉	○	○	○	○
Lack of flexibility to adapt to new and unforeseen developments	○	◉	○	○	○
Lack of consistency and effectiveness to deliver on EU policy priorities	◉	○	○	○	○
Insufficient alignment with national policies	○	◉	○	○	○
Low absorption of funds and insufficient number of high-quality projects	◉	○	○	○	○
Insufficient focus on projects with the highest EU added value (e.g. multi-country projects)	◉	○	○	○	○
Insufficient focus on achieving results	○	◉	○	○	○
Insufficient mobilisation of private financing (e. g. by de-risking private investment)	○	◉	○	○	○
National regulatory environment makes EU funding less effective	○	◉	○	○	○
Fraud, corruption and other illegal activities targeting EU funds	◉	○	○	○	○
Other (please specify below)	◉	○	○	○	○

If you have identified any other obstacles, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

Co-funding requirements for civil society organisations, especially of small size and limited capacity; uptake of funds for important European priorities such as the European Pillar of Social Rights or the EU Care Strategy; Lack of knowledge of the availability of European funds among beneficiaries and bureaucratic hurdles to access these; lack of opportunities for small organisations to find suitable project partners.

To what extent do you agree that the below objectives are supported by EU policies - for Cohesion Policy?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Contribute to achieving EU objectives, including territorial, social and economic cohesion	○	◉	○	○	○
Support EU public goods (e.g. cross-border / multi-country projects)	○	◉	○	○	○
Address cross-border challenges (e.g. climate change)	○	◉	○	○	○

To what extent do you agree that the below objectives are supported by EU policies - for Common agriculture policy?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Contribute to achieving EU objectives, including a fair standard of living for the farming community) and to making the agricultural sector attractive to new entrants	○	○	◉	○	○
Support EU public goods (e.g. the provision of eco-system services, and cross-border cooperation)	○	◉	○	○	○
Address cross-border challenges (e.g. climate change, food security)	○	◉	○	○	○

To what extent do you agree that the below objectives are supported by EU policies - for Fisheries and maritime policies?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Contribute to achieving EU objectives, including fostering sustainable fisheries, and restoring and conserving aquatic biological resources	○	○	○	○	◉
Support EU public goods (e.g. cross-border cooperation)	○	○	○	○	◉
Address cross-border challenges (e.g. climate change)	○	◉	○	○	○

To what extent do you agree that the below objectives are supported by EU policies - for Home affairs?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Contribute to achieving EU objectives, including efficient management of migration, asylum and external borders	○	◉	○	○	○
Support EU public goods (e.g. cross-border / multi-country projects)	○	○	○	○	◉
Address cross-border challenges (e.g. security threats)	○	◉	○	○	○

To what extent do you agree that the below objectives are supported by EU policies - for Trans-European Networks?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Contribute to achieving EU objectives, including a smooth functioning single market, and territorial, social and economic cohesion	○	◉	○	○	○
Support EU cross-border / multi-country infrastructure projects	○	◉	○	○	○
Address cross-border challenges (e.g. military mobility and defence, climate change)	○	◉	○	○	○

To what extent do you agree that the following options could help the EU budget become more effective and efficient?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/ not applicable
Applying common rules, timelines and eligibility criteria to all relevant EU funds	◉	○	○	○	○
Fewer, clearer and simpler rules	◉	○	○	○	○
Reduce the number of EU funding programmes	○	○	◉	○	○
Simplify the management of EU funding programmes at national and regional level	○	◉	○	○	○
Prioritise projects with high EU added value, such as multi-country projects and projects that contribute to the EU's strategic priorities	◉	○	○	○	○

Introduce more flexibility into resource allocation to react to crises and emerging needs	○	◉	○	○	○
Use funds to promote both reforms and investments	◉	○	○	○	○
Simplify access to funding for beneficiaries	◉	○	○	○	○
Use more EU funds to stimulate private and national investment, including through financial instruments (e.g. loans, guarantees, equity)	○	◉	○	○	○
Place greater focus on achieving results, including via performance-based funding (such as financing not linked to costs)	○	○	◉	○	○
Prevent and combat fraud and corruption better, as well as other illegal activities targeting EU funds	◉	○	○	○	○
Other (please specify below)	○	○	○	○	○

Do you agree that the policies covered by the EU budget should continue to support all types of regions and communities in the future?

Maximum 1 selection(s)

- ☑ Yes
- ☐ No

If you selected ‘yes’, please explain why:

500 character(s) maximum

Citizens need to feel that the EU budget also works for them, and not only for some abstract projects working mainly on the economy or infrastructure.
The EU's principles on non-discrimination imply that the EU should aim to target funding to those who are the most excluded or are at risk of exclusion.

If you have any concrete suggestions for improvement, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

Reducing cofunding requirements for small not-for profit organisations, reduce administrative burden on reporting, all while maintaining high standards on transparency about the use of EU funds. Regions are vital stakeholders to know about their needs in their area, and therefore shared management of relevant EU funds with regional authorities should be maintained

If you think that these stakeholders could be involved more effectively, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

Yes, through active outreach and information about available EU funds and the ways to apply/manage them.

Which of the following aspects do you consider the most important for improving the administrative and institutional capacity of public administrations in Member States?

- [x] Predictability of the programming cycle associated with EU-funded investments
- [ ] Flexibility to address a wide variety of Member States' needs
- [x] Focus on key EU priorities with more EU added value
- [x] Helping Member States to identify the areas where technical support would be more impactful
- [x] Sustainability of capacity over time
- [x] Support a wide range of beneficiaries in public administrations at different levels
- [x] Support and information about funding opportunities to potential beneficiaries /applicants
- [ ] Addressing skills needs of national, regional and local authorities
- [x] Other (please specify below)
- [ ] Don't know / unable to answer

If you have identified any another aspects, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

Raise awareness for the importance of EU priorities, such as the European Pillar of Social Rights

Part 3 - Closing questions

If you would like to add further information – within the scope of this questionnaire – please feel free to do so here.

2000 character(s) maximum

Please attach any relevant documents to support your replies.
File upload box - 1 MB max and only pdf, txt, doc, docx, odt and rtf files are allowed.

Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed

dc6eb8ac-9b43-44c1-a8c1-bb3e25ae364b/AGE_contribution_to_MFF_-_Expanding_to_new_priorities.pdf

Contact

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Contribution ID: 31069231-99df-45f1-b57b-e5a7c130319b
Date: 07/05/2025 12:51:45

Public Consultation - EU funding for competitiveness

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

In 2025, the European Commission will put forward a comprehensive proposal for the next long-term budget – the multiannual financial framework (MFF). This includes EU funding providing financial support to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries, including research and technology organisations, small and medium /sized businesses, startups and scale-ups, educational and research institutions, industry clusters, and many others.

Today, EU funding in support of competitiveness is spread over too many overlapping programmes, many of which fund the same thing but with different requirements and difficulties in combining funding effectively, which hinders access to EU funding and limits the impact that the funding can have.

As highlighted in President von der Leyen's Commission's Political Guidelines, as well as in the Competitiveness Compass, the Commission will work on a simpler, more focused and impactful MFF that reflects the European strategic priorities (with the ambition of being an "investment-focused Commission"),

The guidelines also announced the creation of a European Competitiveness Fund, as part of the proposal for the next MFF. As set out in the Competitiveness Compass, this investment capacity should channel investment in strategic technologies along the entire investment journey, from research, through scale-up, industrial deployment, to manufacturing – using the power of the EU budget to de-risk and mobilise private investment for our common goals.

The Commission's proposal for the next MFF will be focused on the things that matter most, in areas where the EU can achieve more than Member States acting alone. This requires a careful assessment both of what has worked well in the past and what could be improved in the future. The next MFF will draw lessons from the current budget – notably in terms of simplicity and flexibility, speed and strategic focus.

As an integral part of the process, the Commission is launching a series of public consultations to gather views from all interested parties on the future EU budget. This consultation covers EU funding in support of EU competitiveness. The decision to cluster issues serves to support the preparatory work and does not pre-empt the architecture of future programmes. This questionnaire consists of 3 parts:

Part 1 collects some information about you Part 2 contains questions related to EU funding for competitiveness. Part 3 comprises 2 closing questions.

Your feedback will inform the analysis of the impact assessment for the European Competitiveness Fund. You can save your replies as a draft and finish later. Please be concise in those questions with a free text box for additional comments. If you want, you can also upload a document with your views at the end of the survey.

About you

Part 1. Questions about you

* Language of my contribution

- ○ Bulgarian
- ○ Croatian
- ○ Czech
- ○ Danish
- ○ Dutch
- ◉ English
- ○ Estonian
- ○ Finnish
- ○ French
- ○ German
- ○ Greek
- ○ Hungarian
- ○ Irish
- ○ Italian
- ○ Latvian
- ○ Lithuanian
- ○ Maltese
- ○ Polish
- ○ Portuguese
- ○ Romanian
- ○ Slovak
- ○ Slovenian
- ○ Spanish
- ○ Swedish

* I am giving my contribution as

- ○ Academic/research institution
- ○ Business association
- ○ Company/business
- ○ Consumer organisation
- ○ EU citizen
- ○ Environmental organisation
- ○ Non-EU citizen

- (●) Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- ( ) Public authority
- ( ) Trade union
- ( ) Other

* First name

Philippe

* Surname

SEIDEL Leroy

* Email (this won't be published)

philippe.seidel@age-platform.eu

* Organisation name

255 character(s) maximum

AGE Platform Europe

* Organisation size

- ( ) Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- (●) Small (10 to 49 employees)
- ( ) Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- ( ) Large (250 or more)

Transparency register number

Check if your organisation is on the transparency register. It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

16549972910-86

* Country of origin

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

This list does not represent the official position of the European institutions with regard to the legal status or policy of the entities mentioned. It is a harmonisation of often divergent lists and practices.

- ( ) Afghanistan
- ( ) Åland Islands
- ( ) Djibouti
- ( ) Dominica
- ( ) Libya
- ( ) Liechtenstein
- ( ) Saint Martin
- ( ) Saint Pierre and Miquelon

- Albania
- Algeria
- American Samoa
- Andorra
- Angola
- Anguilla
- Antarctica
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Aruba
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Belize
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Estonia
- Eswatini
- Ethiopia
- Falkland Islands
- Faroe Islands
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- French Guiana
- French Polynesia
- French Southern and Antarctic Lands
- Gabon
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Greenland
- Grenada
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Macau
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Malta
- Marshall Islands
- Martinique
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Montserrat
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar/Burma
- Namibia
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Samoa
- San Marino
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- Sint Maarten
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
- South Korea
- South Sudan
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen
- Sweden

- Bonaire Saint Eustatius and Saba
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Bouvet Island
- Brazil
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
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- Cameroon
- Canada
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- Cayman Islands
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- China
- Christmas Island
- Clipperton
- Guadeloupe
- Guam
- Guatemala
- Guernsey
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Heard Island and McDonald Islands
- Honduras
- Hong Kong
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Israel
- Italy
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- Nauru
- Nepal
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- Niger
- Nigeria
- Niue
- Norfolk Island
- Northern Mariana Islands
- North Korea
- North Macedonia
- Norway
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- Pakistan
- Palau
- Palestine
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru
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- Syria
- Taiwan
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- Thailand
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- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Türkiye
- Turkmenistan
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- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States

- Cocos (Keeling) Islands
- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo
- Cook Islands
- Costa Rica
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Croatia
- Cuba
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- Czechia
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- Lebanon
- Lesotho
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- Pitcairn Islands
- Poland
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- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Réunion
- Romania
- Russia
- Rwanda
- Saint Barthélemy
- Saint Helena Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
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- Venezuela
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* Contribution publication privacy settings

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

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  Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.
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  Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

☑ I agree with the personal data protection provisions

Since 2021 have you applied for EU funding managed directly or indirectly by the European Commission?

Maximum 1 selection(s)

- ☑ Yes
- ☐ No

Which funds have you applied for?

- ☑ Horizon Europe
- ☐ Digital Europe
- ☐ Innovation Fund
- ☐ InvestEU
- ☐ LIFE
- ☐ Connecting Europe Facility
- ☐ European Defence Fund
- ☐ European Defence Industry Reinforcement Trhough Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA)
- ☐ Act in support of Ammunition programme (ASAP)
- ☐ IRIS²
- ☐ European Space Programme (including Cassini Initiative)
- ☐ Euratom Research and Training Programme

- [ ] ITER
- [ ] EU4Health
- [ ] Other

If other: please indicate which fund

CERV, Erasmus+

Was one or more of your application(s) successful? (Did you receive funding for your project?)

Maximum 1 selection(s)

- [x] Yes
- [ ] No

For which programme(s)/fund(s)?

- [x] Horizon Europe
- [ ] Digital Europe
- [ ] Innovation Fund
- [ ] InvestEU
- [ ] LIFE
- [ ] Connecting Europe Facility
- [ ] European Defence Fund
- [ ] European Defence Industry Reinforcement Through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA)
- [ ] Act in support of Ammunition programme (ASAP)
- [ ] IRIS²
- [ ] European Space Programme (including Cassini initiative)
- [ ] Euratom Research and Training Programme
- [ ] ITER
- [ ] EU4Health
- [ ] Other

How would you describe your experience?

	Very positive	Positive	Negative	Very negative	No opinion
Identifying the funding opportunity	○	○	◉	○	○

The relevance and clarity of the calls	○	◉	○	○	○
The duration of the procedure	○	○	◉	○	○
The application procedure	○	○	◉	○	○
The evaluation of your proposal	○	○	◉	○	○
The implementation of the project	○	◉	○	○	○
The disbursement of the funding	○	○	◉	○	○

Please describe what you consider to be the key challenges in this procedure

500 character(s) maximum

Applications should be simplified and made less voluminous, as the investment effort into applications is disproportionate to the acceptance rate among submitted proposals. There should be the same project officer all along a project o ensure continuity. Moving to lump-sum may simplify financial reporting (if lump-sums are adequate with actual costs). Regarding disbursement, it should not be withheld for all project partners if there is a minor administrative issue with one only.

Part 2. EU funding on Competitiveness

The Commission has preliminarily identified the following challenges linked to competitiveness. How important are these challenges in your view?

	Very important	Important	Moderately important	Not important	No opinion
The innovation and technological gap for the EU in strategic technologies, with respect to key competitors globally	◉	○	○	○	○
Underinvestment in research and innovation	◉	○	○	○	○
Disparities in innovation and industrial capacity across Member States	◉	○	○	○	○
Lack of fertilisation between civil and military research and development	○	○	○	○	◉
Insufficient innovation and manufacturing capacity for strategic technologies	○	◉	○	○	○
Insufficient focus of EU funding on EU strategic priorities	◉	○	○	○	○

Lack of coherence between EU, national and regional policies for competitiveness	○	○	○	○	◉
Climate resilience and costs associated with decarbonisation	◉	○	○	○	○
Excessive dependence of the EU on non-EU countries for critical inputs, raw materials and strategic technologies	○	◉	○	○	○
Access to finance for small businesses and for scale-up companies from research to manufacturing	○	◉	○	○	○
Attracting world class researchers, skilled workers and entrepreneurs from abroad	○	◉	○	○	○
Incapacity to translate innovation into marketable technologies, and failure to integrate these technologies into the EU's industrial base	○	◉	○	○	○
Mismatch between skills and labour market demands	◉	○	○	○	○
Digitalisation and diffusion of advanced technologies in key sectors	○	◉	○	○	○
Insufficient private investment, including by institutional investors	○	◉	○	○	○
Challenges related to the effective protection of EU funds against fraud, corruption and other illegal activity	◉	○	○	○	○
Other (please specify below)	◉	○	○	○	○

If other: please specify below

500 character(s) maximum

Innovation and investment into active and healthy ageing has declined compared to the previous MFF. There should be more investment into social infrastructure and social services, application of the recommendations of the High-Level Group of Expert on Social Protection, identifying the European Pillar of Social Rights as a main EU investment priority, and therein especially investment and innovation of person-led, rights-based long-term care, accessible physical and digital environments.

Which development stages for technologies and products should be supported by the next MFF to support EU competitiveness?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/not applicable
Fundamental research	◉	○	○	○	○
Applied research	○	◉	○	○	○
Early-stage development of technologies	◉	○	○	○	○
Scaling up	◉	○	○	○	○
Industrial deployment	○	◉	○	○	○
Manufacturing capacities	○	◉	○	○	○
Other (please specify below)	○	○	○	○	○

To what extent does the current EU budget contribute to addressing the following challenges?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
Attracting world class researchers, skilled workers and entrepreneurs from abroad	○	◉	○	○
Facilitating collaboration between research and industry	○	◉	○	○
Translation of innovation into marketable technologies, and integration of these technologies into the EU's industrial base	○	○	◉	○
Disparities in innovation and industrial capacity and resources across Member States	○	◉	○	○
Providing world class technological and research infrastructure across the EU	○	◉	○	○
Reducing excessive dependencies in critical inputs, raw materials and strategic technologies	○	◉	○	○
Fertilisation between civil and military research and development	○	○	○	◉
Ensuring continuity in EU funding across the stages from research to manufacturing	○	◉	○	○
Demand-side public initiatives for innovation and strategic technologies (e.g. procurement, standards)	○	○	○	○
Decarbonisation and environmental sustainability of strategic sectors	○	◉	○	○
Digitalisation and diffusion of advanced technologies in key sectors	○	◉	○	○

Support for small businesses and for scale up companies from research to manufacturing	○	○	◉	○
Insufficient mobilisation of private financing (e.g. by de-risking private investment)	○	◉	○	○
Other (please specify below)	○	○	○	○

The Commission has identified a number of possible measures for EU funding to better support EU competitiveness. To what extent do you think such measures could have a positive impact?

	To a large extent	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	Don't know/ not applicable
Applying common rules, timelines and eligibility criteria to all relevant EU funds	○	◉	○	○	○
Increased focus of funding on key current and future strategic priorities	◉	○	○	○	○
Reducing the number of EU funding programmes	○	○	◉	○	○
Continuity in EU funding from research to manufacturing	○	◉	○	○	○
Aligning industrial and research policies and investment at EU and national levels	◉	○	○	○	○
Increase international collaboration with like-minded non-EU partners	○	◉	○	○	○
Targeted tools and measures to limit EU dependencies in strategic key sectors	○	◉	○	○	○
Strengthen business advisory support services (e.g. coaching, mentoring, training) for successful applicants	◉	○	○	○	○
User-friendly IT tools	◉	○	○	○	○
Better feedback to applicants	◉	○	○	○	○
Introduce more flexibility into resource allocation to react to crises and emerging needs	○	◉	○	○	○
Place greater focus on achieving results, including via performance-based funding (such as financing not linked to costs)	○	◉	○	○	○
Preventing and combat fraud and corruption better as well as other illegal activities targeting EU funds	◉	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify below)	○	○	○	○	○

Part 3. Closing questions

If you would like to add further information – within the scope of this questionnaire – feel free to do so here.

Regarding performance-based funding, it all depends on how the unit-costs are calculated, and from experience they are calculated very tightly relative to the cost of the performance provided.
If EU programmes are to be reduced in numbers, the volume of funding should increase as well as the number of granted projects. This should not be a figleaf for reducing the budget and its impact.
Regarding the dependency on critical materials, COVID has shown that the lack of production capacity for medicines and protective equipment puts the EU and its population at risk, therefore the expansion of these capacities should be a priority in the new MFF.
Overall, the focus on competitiveness should not lead to abandoning the idea of social impact funding, as reducing the standard of living, rights and social protection of EU citizens will ultimately translate in reduced competitiveness in terms of the workforce or consumer market. social investment should be just as important an objective as competitiveness, in line with the recommendations of the HLG on the future of social protection.

Attach any relevant documents to support your replies

Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed

16d841a8-67b3-4570-8bcb-47966782ed63/AGE_contribution_to_MFF_-_Expanding_to_new_priorities.pdf

Contact

SG-MFF-PUBLIC-CONSULTATIONS@ec.europa.eu

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AGE REACTION: COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON SUPPORTING OLDER PEOPLE IN THE LABOUR MARKET

25 June 2025



AGE Platform Europe welcomes the adoption of the Council Conclusions on Supporting older people in reaching their full potential in the labour market and in society (https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9321-2025-INIT/en/pdf)**, approved by the EPSCO Council (Employment, Social Policy, Health**

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and Consumer Affairs Council) on 19 June 2025.
These Conclusions represent a meaningful step forward in the recognition of the needs, and contributions of older people across Europe.

Five years after the German Presidency adopted Council Conclusions on older people (https://www.parlament.gv.at/dokument/XXVII/EU/34763/imfname_11010687.pdf), **we warmly welcome the Polish Presidency for bringing this important topic back to the forefront**. By placing older people once again at the centre of the Council Conclusions and taking the initiative to advance the agenda in their favour, the Polish Presidency is helping to close a long-standing gap in European attention to the rights and needs of older people. The newly adopted Conclusions represent a significant step forward in recognising older people as a distinct group that merits dedicated attention within the EU's political priorities.

We welcome these key conclusions

We are pleased that the Conclusion emphasises the need for a shift in mindset to **promote greater societal recognition of the valuable contributions older people** make to economic activity. We welcome the invitation to Member States and the European Commission to ***"combat ageism and negative stereotypes in all areas of society"*** with regard to older people in general and older workers in particular, by raising awareness of the importance and added value of the active participation of older people in economic, family, and community life." We welcome the specific invitation to the Commission to commit to combating ageism, including all forms of discrimination against older people, particularly about accessing their rights and ensuring their full participation in social, cultural, political and economic life. AGE hopes for real commitments to more inclusive and equitable policies for older people.

The Conclusions also rightly underscore **the importance of innovative approaches to employment and social protection**, including flexible working arrangements, fair working conditions, and targeted training opportunities tailored to the needs of older individuals. AGE welcomes the call to address the digital transition through skills development and inclusion, and recognises that

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active ageing policies, along with decent and tailored working conditions, early intervention, health promotion, and disease prevention, can empower older generations to voluntarily extend their working lives. AGE supports the invitation to Member States for best practice exchange and the development of stakeholder dialogue and integrated policy delivery through close partnerships with trade unions, employers, businesses, and civil society organisations, which is essential for developing effective national strategies to address age equality.

Finally, AGE welcomed **the recognition of older people as a heterogeneous group, each with diverse needs, experiences, and contributions**. This understanding is essential for designing inclusive policies that leave no one behind. We strongly support the call for early and continuous prevention strategies throughout the ageing process, with particular attention to those in vulnerable situations. Encouraging employers to harness the potential of older jobseekers and inactive individuals is a key step toward more inclusive labour markets. We also welcome the acknowledgement of the specific challenges faced by **older women**, including the gender pension gap and unequal caregiving responsibilities, as a meaningful move toward gender equality in later life. The promotion of improved data collection disaggregated by age and sex, and the development of policies that reflect the specific needs of older workers, including those with disabilities, are all crucial to fostering a fairer and more age-inclusive society.

Where the Conclusions Still Fall Short

While the Conclusions mark a positive step, **they fall short of fully embracing a human rights-based approach to ageing**. AGE stresses that the right to work is a fundamental human right, and that active ageing must always be a matter of personal choice. Policies should be designed to create meaningful opportunities that empower individuals throughout their life course and careers, enabling older people to participate in the labour market and broader society with dignity, autonomy, and full recognition of their value. Upholding the principle of choice is essential to ensure that extended working lives and participation in general are voluntary, supported, and aligned with individual aspirations and capacities.

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At the same time, **the Conclusions could have gone further in addressing the persistent and harmful impact of ageism and age discrimination**. AGE continues to advocate for a dedicated *EU Action Plan to combat ageism*, to be included in the forthcoming *Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness*. We regret the absence of a concrete commitment to this in the Council Conclusions. Tackling ageism in employment requires bold and coordinated action, including the explicit recognition of age discrimination as a structural barrier to employment, a comprehensive study on its economic impact, and **an enhanced monitoring and review of the *Employment Framework Directive***, including addressing justified exceptions and age limits which build upon and reinforce ageist stereotypes. We also call for an EU-wide campaign on ageism and a thorough assessment of the economic and social potential of older people.

Finally, AGE emphasises **the urgent need for more concrete incentives** and enabling measures to empower older workers and support their participation in the labour market. This includes prioritising lifelong learning and significantly expanding access to adult education and upskilling opportunities tailored to older age groups. Strengthening carers' leave provisions is equally essential, enabling older workers with care responsibilities to balance employment and caregiving without jeopardising their rights or job security. Promoting age-friendly employment practices across all sectors must become a standard, not an exception. Member States and the European Commission should also develop incentives for employers to harness the potential of older jobseekers and inactive individuals by promoting age-inclusive recruitment strategies, mentoring programmes, and flexible working arrangements.

The Council Conclusions represent a strong foundation for future EU and national action. We urge Member States and the European Commission to implement these commitments with ambition and to ensure that older people are meaningfully involved in shaping the policies that affect their lives. AGE stands ready to support the implementation of these Conclusions and to continue advocating for a Europe that respects and empowers older people. Looking ahead, we expect the upcoming EU Presidencies to build on this momentum by further developing the priorities outlined in the Conclusions.

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AGE Barometer 2023

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The AGE Barometer 2023 (https://www.age-platform.eu/barometer-2023/end-age-discrimination-in-employment/) offers a wealth of good practices and policy recommendations from across Europe that can inspire and guide the development of such measures. We hope to see such initiatives reflected in upcoming EU frameworks, including in the *Union of Skills*, the new *European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan*, the *Job Quality Roadmap*, and a future *EU Guarantee for Older People*. These instruments must move beyond general commitments and deliver targeted, practical solutions that ensure older people remain active, valued, and included in the labour market.

Download
(HTTPS://WWW.AGE-PLATFORM.EU/CONTENT/UPLOADS/2023/11/AGE-BAROMETER-2023_VF_EN.PDF)

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Annex 10

AGE PLATFORM Europe
TOWARD A SOCIETY FOR ALL AGES

Policy Paper

Tackling old-age poverty

AGE Platform Europe

19 February 2025

www.age-platform.eu

AGE Platform Europe Policy Paper

19 February 2025

AGE Platform Europe (AGE) and its members welcome the European Commission's commitment to introduce the **first-ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy** and the commitment of the Executive Vice-President on People, Skills and Preparedness, Roxana Mînzatu, to "*develop an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy that will be effective in supporting those who are most disadvantaged in our society and in addressing social inequalities*[1]."

As an active member of the EAPN-European Anti-Poverty Network, we endorse their call for a holistic and cross-cutting policy approach that recognises and addresses the interaction of the complex and multi-dimensional causes of poverty. In this policy paper, we support a rights-based approach to highlighting the **urgent challenges faced by older people at risk of poverty or already living in poverty**.

Summary of our recommendations

AGE calls on the European Commission to recognize **the impact of ageism** which is a major obstacle to recognising and addressing the causes of poverty among older people in Europe. In 2023, almost 20% of people aged 65 and over and 20.9% of people aged 50-64 were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. In seven Member States, more than 30% of people over 65 were at risk of poverty and social exclusion (Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania). Yet ageism perpetuates discrimination that exacerbates these economic difficulties and limits the implementation of appropriate solutions.

Older persons with other characteristics related to their gender, sexual orientation, disability, social origin or ethnicity may face additional barriers and challenges that further limit their access to economic and social resources. Older women for instance

[1] Written answers of the Executive Vice-President for People, Skills and Preparedness, Rowana Mînzatu to the European Parliament Questionnaire

are disproportionately affected and most at risk of poverty, with poverty rates up to 7.1 percentage points higher than men's for women over 75 years old. It is essential that the new Anti-Poverty Strategy adopts **an intersectional approach** taking into account the perspectives and lived experiences of older persons, as well as the complexity of disadvantages, prejudices and biases that people may experience, and which put them at increased risk of poverty.

AGE and its members are calling for the Anti-Poverty to be **based on a human rights approach**. The strategy must ensure well-being and dignity alongside the EU's objectives of economic growth and competitiveness, by enhancing financial security of people of all ages. The fight against poverty among older people through adequacy of pensions and old-age minimum income must not be a secondary issue, but a central commitment of the upcoming strategy and the EU's socio-economic policies.

Preventing the risk of poverty among older workers

Ageism and age discrimination have a major impact on older workers, going as far as denying their right to work[2] and putting them at significant risk of poverty. Age discrimination in labour markets is reflected in the lack of learning opportunities for older workers, in poor workplaces adaptations or in unsuitable working conditions. Lifelong learning, age-friendly workplaces, and flexible working conditions are essential to guarantee sustainable and quality working lives. Without these, older workers are more likely to see their working hours cut back, to be in precarious jobs or to be unemployed, sometimes for long periods. Inadequate labour protections, fluctuating and/or low incomes or limited access to employer-provided benefits, increase the risk of financial insecurity in-work but also in pension.

To mitigate the risk of poverty, the Anti-Poverty Strategy should promote decent work by guaranteeing fair wages, notably through the implementation of the 2022 Adequate Wage directive in all EU Member States. We are calling on the Strategy to reinforce the right to work at any age, to develop stable jobs, lifelong learning opportunities and

[2] AGE Barometer 2023 on sustainable and quality working lives

working conditions adapted to older workers through a person-centred approach. Such advances will not only reduce the risk of in-work poverty but will also facilitate people to build up sufficient savings for their retirement.

Finally, we are calling on paying specific attention to **older women who are particularly affected** by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in the labour market. The gender pay gap for people between 55 and 64 years old is the highest of all age groups (12.5 percentage points). Women are discriminated against because of their gender from an early age. This discrimination accumulates and intersects ageism in later life. The pay gap between men and women and the fact that women are more likely to provide family and informal care, i.e. contributing to a reduction of working hours, are just a few examples of the way discrimination against women manifests itself in the labour market, impacting their income and leading gradually to poverty.

Preventing the risk of poverty among pensioners

The transition from employment to retirement involves a change in the source of income, from salary to pension. Indeed, pensions are valued at close to three fifths of the income received by people at the end of their working lives. This difference in income is also related to the fact that, in some cases, working people are granted bonuses or overtime work pay. But even though pensioners often face additional expenses, including higher health and long-term care costs, which put a strain on their budget, these are not taken into account in their pension income. The Anti-Poverty Strategy must encourage Member States implementation of the 2023 Council recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion, including through a government minimum income covering "all person lacking sufficient resources". The first step could be to **implement or extend a universal non-contributory pension scheme** to ensure all pensioners have a basic income, regardless of their employment history.

Although non-contributory pensions should play a crucial role in protecting older people from poverty, they are often not keeping pace with wages and prices increases,

leading to decreasing pensioners' purchasing power over time and an increase in poverty and social exclusion among older people. Pension reforms in some Member States have reduced benefits for the most recent generations of pensioners, by increasing the retirement age or reducing the pensions. At the same time no or insufficient attention is paid to the early exit from the labour market due to the persisting ageism in employment. Specific safety nets are needed for those who cannot work for justified reasons and/or achieve pensionable age. The rising cost of living in regions where many pensioners live, partly due to gentrification, is driving pensioners out of these areas. If pensions do not keep pace with this increase, there is a risk that **the gap will widen between social inequalities but also between generations**.

To support pensioners, the Anti-Poverty strategy should encourage Member States to adopt **automatic indexation of pensions** supported by a revaluation index linked to goods and services appropriate to the consumption patterns of older persons e.g. cost of long-term care services for the oldest old which are labour-intensive and thus expensive (for more see the next chapter on access to services). The Strategy must insist on **strengthening the indexation mechanism for the lowest incomes** to avoid widening the gap between the richest and the poorest. In periods of high inflation, **additional instruments to support purchasing power**, such as temporary price controls on essential goods and services (food, energy, housing), should be introduced as automatically as possible,

National differences in pension schemes can also create financial difficulties for mobile workers. Yet **freedom of movement is a fundamental right of EU citizens that must be safeguarded at all ages.** At a time when mobility between Member States is becoming a reality for an increasing number of European workers, **a better coordination of social security systems that includes tax coordination** is becoming more pressing than ever. Today, while pensioners may be able to receive benefits across borders, they may be required to navigate multiple tax systems potentially leading to double taxation or confusion about which country has the right to tax their pension income. This situation is very disadvantageous, particularly when the Member State of residence finances the healthcare system mainly from its tax income and the other

Member State from which the pensioner receives his pension finances the healthcare service mainly through premiums and contributions.

In addition, a guarantee for greater **transparency of pension contributions** is necessary to ensure that individuals understand how their retirement savings are structured and managed. The Anti-Poverty Strategy must encourage Member States to raise awareness of the need to save throughout life, providing financial education focused on retirement planning and advising on the importance of supplementary pensions.

Significant disparities between men's and women's wages should be tackled as they also have an impact and are reflected in pensions, contributing to an increased risk of poverty among older women. In 2023, the pension received by women over 65 in the EU is on average 25,4% lower than that of men. Due to career breaks and part-time work, women may not accumulate sufficient pension rights over the course of their working lives. As long as these inequalities persist and the autonomy of older women in the labour market is undermined, **survivor's pensions** will be essential to limit the risk of poverty for women who have not accumulated sufficient pension rights. In this respect, it is necessary to ensure that survivor benefits are extended to same-sex partners and chosen family structures. We need to ensure **a social security system that is gender-inclusive** and meets the specific realities of older persons with a better consideration of life course's diversity.

Ensuring affordable and accessible essential services

Access to **affordable and quality essential services** plays a crucial role in preventing poverty among older persons. In terms of health care, high medical costs can quickly deplete savings, while cuts in health services and long waiting times can force older persons to resort to expensive private care, which can put them in financial difficulty. The Anti-Poverty Strategy should support Member States to **introduce universal healthcare coverage** to ensure free or affordable access to essential services, including preventive care and mental health care. **Formal local support services must be**

strengthened, especially for those living in remote or isolated areas, where older populations are overrepresented. **Long-term care** is another critical factor, as many older persons require ongoing assistance, the cost of which can be prohibitive in the absence of an adequate public provision. Publicly funded home care programmes for older persons on low incomes should be encouraged to ease the financial burden and improve their general well-being.

Pensioners are also more **vulnerable to energy poverty**, not least because many live in energy inefficient homes, or are more likely to spend more time at home than working people and/or might require higher indoor temperatures as the metabolism tends to slow down with age. **Age limits in access to credit and credit schemes** impose barriers for older persons to make green transitions and necessary adaptations to deal with cold or extreme heat, or to move into more appropriate and safe housing. Member States must **abolish these age limits** and **adopt the long-awaited horizontal equality directive** to ban, among other grounds, age discrimination in all areas of social life.

The digital divide also exacerbates the difficulties of managing energy costs and accessing support programmes. The fact that many public services and financial tools are mainly available online increases these inequalities and limits the access of many older people to the information they need to improve their homes and adapt their lifestyles to rising prices. The Anti-Poverty Strategy should therefore prioritize **offline assistance and ensure access to information for all.** It must also make the green transition a central element in ensuring **a just transition** that does not increase inequalities and the risk of poverty. Renewable energy technologies must be accessible and affordable to all, and older people must be involved in drawing up disaster preparedness and climate adaptation plans for extreme weather events such as heat waves.

Finally, the participation of those directly affected by decision-making and policy development is essential. **The right to participate** must be at the heart of the Anti-Poverty Strategy, **guaranteeing opportunities for active ageing[3], tailored to individual preferences and abilities**. This approach helps to reduce socio-economic

[3] AGE Manifesto Explainer_Foster Participation and active ageing

inequalities and effectively combat poverty. It includes developing transport networks and offering affordable social fares for the most disadvantaged. An inclusive and effective policy must recognise the value of the lived experience of people affected by poverty. Their involvement makes it possible to better understand the realities on the ground and to develop measures that are genuinely appropriate, while strengthening their autonomy and dignity.

***

You can stop the perpetuation of ageism!

Please read our one-pager on communicating on older persons in a non-stereotypical way.

About AGE Platform Europe

AGE Platform Europe is the largest European network of non-profit organizations of and for older people. We elevate older people's voice, bringing their experience and aspirations to the table to celebrate ageing and fight for equality at all ages.

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Transparency Register ID: 16549972091-86

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Law

Feedback from: AGE Platform Europe

1. Have your say - Public Consultations and Feedback *(./have-your-say)*
2. ...
3. Published initiatives *(./have-your-say/initiatives)*
4. EU Anti-Poverty Strategy *(./have-your-say/initiatives/14683-EU-Anti-Poverty-Strategy)*
5. Feedback from:

Feedback reference	F3590290
Submitted on	08 August 2025
Submitted by	Sarah Loriato
User type	Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
Organisation	AGE Platform Europe
Organisation size	Small (10 to 49 employees)
Transparency register number	16549972091-86 *(http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/consultation/displaylobbyist.do?id=16549972091-86&locale=en)*
Country of origin	Belgium
Initiative	EU Anti-Poverty Strategy *(/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14683-EU-Anti-Poverty-Strategy_en)*

'AGE Platform Europe welcomes the European Commissions commitment to develop the first-ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy and supports a rights-based, intersectional, and inclusive approach to addressing poverty in later life. With nearly 20% of people aged 65+ and 20.9% of those aged 5064 at risk of poverty

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or social exclusion in 2023, and over 30% people over 65 in seven Member States, urgent action is needed to address the structural and systemic causes of old-age poverty. 1. Combatting ageism and intersectional discrimination Ageism remains a major barrier to recognising and addressing poverty among older people. It intersects with other forms of discrimination compounding exclusion and economic insecurity. Older women are particularly affected, with poverty rates up to 7.1 percentage points higher than mens for those aged 75+. The Strategy must explicitly address ageism and adopt an intersectional lens to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities. 2. Ensuring adequate incomes and decent work The Strategy must prioritise income security through: Adequate pensions and minimum income schemes, including universal non-contributory pensions. Automatic pension indexation linked to older persons consumption patterns. Implementation of the 2023 Council Recommendation on Adequate Minimum Income. Measures to prevent in-work poverty among older workers, including fair wages, age-friendly workplaces, and lifelong learning opportunities. Older workers face age discrimination in employment, limited access to training, and precarious work conditions. The Strategy should reinforce the right to work at any age and promote sustainable, quality employment. 3. Addressing gender pension gaps Women over 65 receive pensions 25.4% lower than men on average due to career breaks, part-time work, and caregiving responsibilities. The Strategy must: Tackle gender pay and pension gaps. Ensure survivors pensions are inclusive of same-sex partners and diverse family structures. Promote gender-inclusive social security systems that reflect diverse life courses. 4. Guaranteeing access to essential services Access to affordable, quality services is critical to preventing poverty: Universal healthcare coverage, including mental health and preventive care. Publicly funded long-term care and home support services. Measures to address energy poverty, including abolishing age limits on green transition,

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> *financing and ensuring access to affordable housing and energy-efficient homes. Bridging the digital divide by ensuring offline access to services and information. 5. Promoting participation The Strategy must address the challenges faced by mobile pensioners, including: Better coordination of social security and tax systems to prevent double taxation. Transparency in pension contributions and financial education on retirement planning. Older people must be actively involved in shaping policies that affect them. The Strategy should: Guarantee the right to participate in decision-making. Promote participation through inclusive transport, social participation, and recognition of lived experiences. The EU Anti-Poverty Strategy must place older persons at its core, recognising their rights, needs, and contributions. Tackling old-age poverty is not only a matter of social justice but also essential to building a fairer, more inclusive Europe for all generations.'*

Feedback from: AGE Platform Europe

EN (262.1 KB - PDF - 8 pages)
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Annex 12

New EPSR Action Plan

AGE Platform Europe Proposal

AGE Platform Europe

11 June 2025

www.age-platform.eu

AGE Platform Europe Policy Statement

11 June 2025

AGE Platform Europe is the largest European network of organizations representing and defending the rights of older people. We work to ensure that EU policies promote equal opportunities, dignity, and quality of life for all people as they age.

The European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) emerged in response to the austerity measures of 2010–2015 which weakened social protection systems. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the consequences of underinvesting in social rights. The EPSR and its Action Plans also addressed the limited progress of the Europe 2020 Strategy in reducing poverty and boosting employment. Since the EPSR adoption in 2017 and the launch of its first action plan in 2021, the EU has taken important steps to strengthen its social dimension. While the 2019–2024 mandate brought greater focus to social issues, implementation of the 20 EPSR principles remains uneven. Key targets, such as 60% participation in education and training, exclude older age groups, and despite rising old-age poverty since 2015, no targeted measures have been introduced, threatening progress toward poverty reduction goals.

The upcoming review of the EPSR Action Plan provides a crucial opportunity to reaffirm the EU's social ambition. In this contribution, AGE Platform Europe presents concrete proposals for a selection of new initiatives at EU level that we believe should be included in the revised Action Plan. These recommendations are based on the lived experience of older people and aim to ensure that the next phase of the EPSR truly guarantees social rights for all, at all ages.

Equal opportunities and access to the labour market

#1 - Education, training and lifelong learning

To meet the EU’s goal of 60% adult participation in training by 2030, the new Action Plan must address the exclusion of older people from education and make learning opportunities relevant to all, regardless of age or employment status.

AGE Platform Europe recommends to:

- **Promote lifelong learning:** Remove age limits and expand equal access to education beyond the labour market, and to reflect this in the indicators used to measure progress.
- **Foster inclusive and intergenerational training**: Design inclusive programs that encourage learning across age groups.
- **Ensure education is accessible and affordable for all:** Provide guided, offline, and financially accessible learning options for all.
- Maintain the objective of reaching **80% of people having at least basic digital skills,** but expand the measurement beyond the current 75 years age limit.

These priorities should be reflected in the upcoming EU initiatives:

- Union of Skills
- Individual Learning Accounts - *AGE_Policy_Statement_on_individual_learning_accounts-May2022.pdf*

#2 - Gender equality

Older women face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that accumulate throughout their lives, resulting in significant inequalities in later life. Gender-based inequalities compound over the lifecourse, leading to disparities in income (gender pay gap that leads to the gender pension and old-age poverty gap), health, participation in the labour market, and access to services in old age.

It is essential to recognize how ageism intersects with sexism, ableism, racism, and socio-economic disadvantages, creating systemic barriers that older women face. Despite representing a growing share of the population, older women's voices, lived experiences, and needs are often overlooked in policy and public discourses, while they experience ageing in gender-specific and often unequal ways.

AGE Platform Europe recommends to:

- **Address the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in every aspect of daily life**, including in all relevant social, economic, and political domains, with attention to the lived experiences and challenges of older women.

- **Combat gender-based violence against older women** by strengthening cooperation between key services and agencies to ensure better support services for older women victims of domestic violence.
- **Tackle the gender pay, pension, and old-age poverty gaps** by promoting equal pay, supporting women's full participation in the labour market, and reforming pension systems to better account for unpaid care work and interrupted careers.
- **Collect and analyse sex-disaggregated data across different age groups** to ensure that the lived experiences and specific issues of older women are properly considered.

These priorities should be reflected in the upcoming EU initiatives:

- Gender Equality Strategy post-2025

#3 - Equal opportunities

The current EU policy and legislative framework offers asymmetric and incomplete protection, covering some grounds better than others. The Special Eurobarometer SP535 data reveals that age-related discrimination is widespread across sectors, with 38% of people aged 55–64 reporting discrimination when job-seeking, 50% of those aged 45–54 and 41% of those aged 65–74 experiencing it in healthcare, 14% of 65–74-year-olds facing it in accessing social services.

Age is the least covered ground among those included in the EU treaties, with only the directive relating to employment and occupation including protection against age discrimination, with important exceptions. Whereas the other grounds covered by the EU treaties are the subject of equality action plans/strategies, to date the EU has not adopted a strategy covering age discrimination. The proposed withdrawal of the horizontal equal treatment directive would mean that there is also no legislative initiative covering age discrimination in its entirety.

AGE Platform Europe recommends:

- **Adopt the draft horizontal equal treatment directive** to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall EU's anti-discrimination framework in line with the commitments included in the EU Treaties and the Charter of

Fundamental Rights. In case the EC decides to withdraw the current proposal, immediately propose a more robust and comprehensive legislative proposal that takes an intersectional approach, along with a clear timeline.

- **Integrate the age equality dimension in EU equality strategies:** integrate older people's rights into all EU equality strategies.
- **Combat ageism in a dedicated Action Plan:** include a specific Action Plan to combat ageism within the upcoming Strategy for Intergenerational Fairness.

These priorities should be reflected in the upcoming EU initiatives:

- LGBTIQ Equality and Anti-Racism Strategies
- Strategy for Intergenerational Fairness
- Gender Equality Strategy post-2025
- Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

#4 - Active support to employment

To meet the EU's 78% employment target by 2030, inclusive labour market policies must actively support older workers, whose employment rate still lags due to persistent ageism and discrimination.

AGE Platform Europe recommends:

- **Reassess age-based exemptions in the Employment Equality Directive**, which currently limits equal access and participation in the labour market and hinders efforts to promote longer, healthier working lives.
- **Promote the value of age-diverse workforces** by encouraging employers, policymakers, and judiciary bodies to recognize the benefits of recruiting and retaining workers across all ages, challenging ageist stereotypes and discriminatory hiring practices.
- **Recognize quality jobs as a foundation for sustainable employment:** Provide career guidance and targeted support to help older workers stay employed in quality jobs and avoid long-term exclusion.

These priorities should be reflected in the upcoming EU initiatives:

- Employment Equality directive - The_right_to_work_in_old_age-AGE_Platform_Europe_June2021.pdf
- Quality Job Roadmap - AGE-Barometer-2023_vf_EN.pdf
- European Job Guarantee

Fair working conditions

#9 - Work-Life balance

Adequate and flexible working conditions, along with quality care services, are essential not only to support but also to empower informal caregivers. AGE supports the EU Work-Life Balance Directive but believe it does not go far enough concerning informal care in terms of social protection and remuneration of carers, as well as flexibility and extent of care leaves.

AGE Platform Europe recommends to:

- **Strengthen carers' leave:** ensure an adequate amount of paid leave and the right to flexible work, with clear EU standards and employer accountability.
- **Value caregiving through financial and structural support for informal carers,** through compensation, continued full social protection coverage, pension credits, and access to services.
- **Adopt an inclusive and intersectional approach:** broaden the definition of informal carers in EU law to ensure equal rights for all, including the self-employed and retired, while promoting the equal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men.
- **Encourage Member States to invest in support services for informal carers,** including respite care, day care, training, peer support, and counselling, with explicit prioritisation in the next iteration of NextGenerationEU and other European funding instruments.

These priorities should be reflected in the following EU policies:

- EU Care Strategy EU and National priorities for long-term care reform
- Work-Life Balance Directive - Policy Paper

#10 - Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data

Creating age-friendly workplaces means addressing the physical and mental health needs of older workers while ensuring they are not left behind in the digital transition. A supportive work environment must adapt to diverse realities to promote longer, healthier, and more inclusive working lives.

AGE Platform Europe recommends to:

- **Improve physical working conditions along the working lives**: reduce physical strain and ensure occupational health policies reflect ageing over the lifecourse.
- **Promote mental wellbeing at all ages in the workplace culture**: shape well-being policies, fostering an open and age-positive work environment, and addressing age-related health topics, such as menopause, without stigma.
- **Bridge the digital divide and design inclusive digital tools**: offer tailored digital training and ensure workplace technologies are accessible to all, including those facing sensory or cognitive challenges.

These priorities should be reflected in the following EU policies:

- The next Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work - AGE-Barometer-2023_vf_EN.pdf
- Support mental health across the lifecourse - Mental health of older persons

Social protection and inclusion

#12 - Social protection

#14 - Minimum income

#15 - Old-age income and pensions

Older people, including older women, migrants, and those living alone, remain at high risk of poverty due to structural inequalities, inadequate pensions, and limited access to services. About one in five older persons is at risk of poverty and social exclusion, with an increasing trend, in some member states over 40%, and gender gaps are extremely high particularly for people over 75. A rights-based, lifecourse approach is key to ensuring dignity and financial security in later life.

AGE Platform Europe recommends:

- **Strengthen social protection systems:** guarantee adequate and sufficient income support to escape the risk of poverty and social inclusion, including for those without full pension rights, and ensure that arising needs for health and long-term care do not put people at risk of poverty and exclusion.
- **Index social transfers to the cost of living**: index pensions and social transfers to real inflation and essential expenses.
- **Make minimum income schemes truly adequate:** strengthen the Council Recommendation by requiring Member States to progressively raise minimum incomes to ensure a life in dignity.
- **Apply a lifecourse and intersectional approach**: Address overlapping inequalities, such as age and gender, by ensuring anti-poverty policies reflect the diverse realities of older people.

These priorities should be reflected in the following EU policies:

- Anti-Poverty Strategy - Tackling old age poverty
- Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income
- Keeping the energy – Older persons in the 2022 inflation surge

#16 – Healthcare

Older persons can struggle to access the health care they need, due to the lack of generalists and specialist medical professions, in particular geriatricians, sometimes high out of pocket payments and long waiting periods. Ageism exists in some health policies, such as through cut-off ages for cancer screening and the fact that data about effectiveness of medicine is still biassed towards male, middle-aged patients with no comorbidities. More attention should be put into developing health promotion and prevention in both physical and mental health, and to develop access to mental health care on par with physical health care.

AGE Platform Europe recommends to:

- **Present an EU Strategy for health promotion and prevention**, which has the potential to reduce the disease burden both for individuals and societies, by addressing the socio-economic determinants of ill-health.
- **Address the shortage of healthcare workers**, raise the status of less valued professions, and propose an initiative to develop geriatric skills across all healthcare professions in line with demographic change.
- **Address the development of 'medical deserts',** by mapping the proximity of generalist, specialist and hospital care services in the EU's regions and encourage the creation of mobile or rural health centres through EU funds.
- **Boost age-related health research and care**: invest in research on diseases affecting older people's autonomy, ensure vaccination in old age, and address bias through an intersectional approach.
- **Reintroduce the aim to increase healthy life years** in the EU's research programme
- The EU should actively engage with the **World Health Organisations' Ageing is Living Work Programme and the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing.**

These priorities should be reflected in:

- An EU Mental Health initiative - AGE_2025_Older_Persons_Mental_health.pdf
- The next EU Multiannual Financial Framework - AGE-contribution-to-MFF-Expanding-to-new-priorities.pdf

#18 – Long-term Care

Access to long-term care remains uneven across EU Member States, with residential care still dominating service provision. High costs make care a major driver of poverty and social exclusion, especially as it is often delivered informally by unpaid family members, predominantly women, impacting their careers, income, and health. Intra-EU migration further strains systems, as some countries lose younger, skilled workers needed to support ageing populations. Abuse prevention is not systematically integrated into care services, and persistent workforce shortages undermine quality and access.

AGE calls for the development of person-centred, rights-based long-term care systems that treat care as a component of social protection, supporting individuals to live independently and with dignity.

AGE Platform Europe recommends to:

- **Guarantee that persons with care needs stay in control** by addressing procedures to withdraw legal capacity and develop supported decision-making procedures, as well as advance directives
- **Develop quality standards** for patient-centred, rights-based care and support
- **Encourage investment int home care, community-based care** which support autonomy and independence, including by making use of the flexibility of the new Economic Governance Framework and through the active use of EU funds
- **Monitor and control the quality of care of all types of service providers**, public, not-for profit, for-profit and of the social economy

These priorities should be reflected in:

- EU and national Priorities for long-term care reform - Care must empower us throughout our lives - AGE position paper - AGE Platform Europe
- The next EU Multiannual Financial Framework - AGE-contribution-to-MFF-Expanding-to-new-priorities.pdf
- The creation of an EU Care Platform - Joint statement: The Commission must give space to its ambitions for reform long-term care! - AGE Platform Europe

#17 - Inclusion of people with disabilities

Older people with disabilities often face discrimination and exclusion due to the combination of ageism with ableism, as well as age limits in access to disability services and benefits. The specific challenges at intersection of old age and disability, beyond the field of care, have not been adequately reflected in the ongoing EU Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

AGE Platform Europe recommends to:

- **Establish new actions within the Strategy for the period 2025-2030**, that take due account of the intersection of ageing and disability and the particular role of older people as caregivers for people with disabilities.
- **Ensure the revision of** the proposed Regulation COM/2023/280 final, and the proposed Council Decision COM(2023) 281 final/2 which aim to apply the Hague Convention of 13 January 2000 on the International Protection of Adults at EU context, to ensure compliance with the UNCRPD.

These priorities should be reflected in:

- EU Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2025-2030
- Regulation COM/2023/280 final
- The proposed Council Decision COM(2023) 281 final/2

#20 - Access to essential services

Access to essential services is key to ensure autonomy, participation and dignity. While their access can be limited due to affordability, accessibility and/or availability, the equality angle is also important to take on board. For example, in some EU countries, older people may not be entitled to disability benefits if they acquire their disability above the age of 60-65 years old. This limits their resources and the possibility of accessing transport or care services. It should also be noted that while digitalisation provides opportunities to improve access to essential services, it can also increase barriers and even create new ones.

AGE Platform Europe recommends:

- **Ensure full and equal access to mainstream services**, so that face-to-face options remain available whenever services are digitalised (e.g., public administration, transport, bank).
- **Tackle the digital divide and digital poverty** by funding support and initiatives to improve infrastructure (access to electricity and broadband coverage), to support equipment (PCs, tablets, smartphones) and digital literacy.
- **Prioritize accessible and affordable public transport** in its funding programs to ensure door-to-door mobility between and within EU countries, notably for people living in remote and/or segregated community/area.

- **Apply accessibility regulations and standards** to improve access to essential services for all citizens, including older people and people with disabilities.
- **Beneficiaries should be involved** in the design of services and regularly consulted to ensure their views and experiences are taken on board.

These priorities should be reflected in:

- The Digital Decade policy programme - Digitalisation and older people, our call to EU Policy Makers

You can stop ageism!

Please read our one-pager on communicating on older persons in a non-stereotypical way.

About AGE Platform Europe

AGE Platform Europe is the largest European network of non-profit organizations of and for older people. We elevate older people's voice, bringing their experience and aspirations to the table to celebrate ageing and fight for equality at all ages.

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Transparency Register ID: 16549972091-86

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Feedback from: AGE Platform Europe

1. Have your say - Public Consultations and Feedback *(./have-your-say)*
2. ...
3. Published initiatives *(./have-your-say/initiatives)*
4. The new Action Plan on the implementation *(./have-your-say/initiatives/14736-The-new-Action-Plan-on-the-implementation)*
5. Feedback from:

Feedback reference	F3569522
Submitted on	24 June 2025
Submitted by	Sarah Loriato
User type	Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
Organisation	AGE Platform Europe
Organisation size	Medium (50 to 249 employees)
Transparency register number	16549972091-86 *(http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/consultation/displaylobbyist.do?id=16549972091-86&locale=en)*
Country of origin	Belgium
Initiative	The new Action Plan on the implementation *(/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14736-The-new-Action-Plan-on-the-implementation_en)*

'AGE Platform Europe is the largest EU network representing older people. Our recommendations for the new European Pillar of

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Social Rights (EPSR) Action Plan emphasizes the need for a more inclusive and age-sensitive approach to EU social policy. Our proposal responds to the shortcomings of previous strategies, particularly the limited inclusion of older adults in key targets and the growing issue of old-age poverty, which has been exacerbated by austerity measures and the COVID-19 pandemic. While the EPSR has made progress since its adoption in 2017, the implementation of its 20 principles remains uneven. Older people are often excluded from education and training initiatives, and age-related discrimination persists in employment, healthcare, and access to services. The upcoming new of the EPSR Action Plan is a critical opportunity to reaffirm the EUs commitment to social rights for all, regardless of age. Our proposal (see attachment) covers several key areas and highlights essential recommendations, linked to existing or future European initiatives, to better understand and implement the principles of the EPSR. In education and lifelong learning, we call for the removal of age limits and the promotion of inclusive, intergenerational learning opportunities. We also advocate for expanding digital skills training to include those over 75. On gender equality, the compounded discrimination faced by older women is a reality and targeted measures are needed to address gender pay and pension gaps, as well as better support for victims of gender-based violence. In terms of equal opportunities, we urge the EU to adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination directive that includes age as a protected category and to integrate age equality into all EU strategies. A dedicated action plan to combat ageism should be at the core of the next EU Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness. Regarding employment, we need to remove age-based exemptions in employment law, promote age-diverse workplaces, and support older workers in maintaining quality employment. Regarding work-life balance, stronger rights and support for informal carers, including financial and structural compensation and access to services is crucial. There is a strong need for

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healthy, safe, and inclusive work environments that support both physical and mental well-being, particularly in the context of the digital and green transformations. On social protection and inclusion, we call for stronger income support systems, indexing pensions to the cost of living, and ensuring that minimum income schemes provide a dignified standard of living. Addressing healthcare access, particularly the shortage of geriatric professionals and the need for age-inclusive health policies, is also at the heart of our advocacy. AGE supports the development of person-centered, rights-based long-term care systems and calls for investment in home and community-based care. Finally, we call on a better understanding of the challenges faced by older people with disabilities and call for their inclusion in the EU Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We also emphasize the importance of ensuring access to essential services, including digital and transport services, and tackling the digital divide. Overall, our proposal advocates for a rights-based, intersectional, and lifecourse approach to social policy, ensuring that older people are fully included in the EUs social agenda.'

Feedback from: AGE Platform Europe

EN (346.6 KB - PDF - 12 pages)
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All feedback

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Feedback from: AGE Platform Europe

1. Have your say - Public Consultations and Feedback *(./have-your-say)*
2. ...
3. Published initiatives *(./have-your-say/initiatives)*
4. Quality Jobs Roadmap *(./have-your-say/initiatives/14707-Quality-Jobs-Roadmap)*
5. Feedback from:

Feedback reference	F3574796
Submitted on	10 July 2025
Submitted by	Sarah Loriato
User type	Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
Organisation	AGE Platform Europe
Organisation size	Small (10 to 49 employees)
Transparency register number	16549972091-86 *(http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/consultation/displaylobbyist.do?id=16549972091-86&locale=en)*
Country of origin	Belgium
Initiative	Quality Jobs Roadmap *(/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14707-Quality-Jobs-Roadmap_en)*

'The Quality Jobs Roadmap must address the challenges of an ageing workforce. As highlighted by the AGE Barometer 2023, older workers face persistent barriers like ageism, limited training access, and unsuitable workplaces. Despite demographic shifts, they remain underrepresented in employment policies, with older

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womens employment rates as low as 40% in some EU countries. To ensure fair and inclusive employment, the Roadmap must adopt a human rights and life-course approachrecognising older workers' diversity and supporting their continued participation through flexible, empowering policies. Key Recommendations: 1. Combat age discrimination and promote workplaces for all ages Monitor and review of the Employment Framework Directive to ensure stronger protection against age discrimination in the workplace, including addressing justified exceptions and age limits which build upon and reinforce ageist stereotypes. Launch an EU-wide campaign to raise awareness of the negative impact of ageism in employment.. Promote the value of age-diverse workforces by encouraging employers, policymakers, and judiciary bodies to recognise and seize the benefits of recruiting and retaining workers across all ages. 2. Ensure access to lifelong learning Strengthening implementation of the Council Recommendations on Upskilling Pathways and Individual Learning accounts and ensuring initiatives developed under the Union of Skills are inclusive of older adults and responsive to their specific learning and employment needs. Promote a person-centered approach that empowers individuals of all ages, including through access to paid educational leave, removing age limits to training, and developing learning opportunities with the evolving demands of the green and digital transitions. Encouraging career reviews at several stages of life to assess employees challenges, skills, aspirations, and barriers to participation.. 3. Adapt workplaces and working conditions for all ages Promote age-friendly workplaces, including ergonomic adjustments, accessible technologies, and health and safety measures tailored to older workers. Review the Work-Life Balance Directive, increasing carers leave days, guarantee minimum remuneration standards, and protect carers, especially older women, from dismissal or forced early retirement. Promote sustainable and flexible working time models by encouraging

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Member States and employers to pilot and scale up reduced working time arrangements without increasing daily hours or reducing pay. Tackle physical and psychosocial risks at work, tailoring the EU Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Framework to the evolving needs of ageing workers, such as strong symptoms of menopause for older women. 4. Foster flexible work and phased retirement options Remove barriers to continued work, such as mandatory retirement policies and restrictions on combining pensions with employment income. Develop EU guidance and recommendations for companies on adopting age equality plans and creating job opportunities beyond statutory retirement ages. Guarantee adequate social protection and income security at all ages, including for older workers in non-standard or precarious employment. 5. Monitor progress and promote policy coherence Include disaggregated data by gender and age groups in the Roadmaps monitoring framework, covering employment rates, training access, and working conditions. Develop a European-wide job quality indicator to monitor working conditions and track improvements across all age groups Develop EU guidance and recommendations for Member States and companies on adopting national strategies on ageing at work, aligned with the European Pillar of Social Rights and the green and digital transitions.'

Feedback from: AGE Platform Europe

EN (2.9 MB - PDF - 112 pages)

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European Affordable Housing Plan

Contribution to open consultation

AGE Platform Europe

16 October 2025

www.age-platform.eu

Introduction

As the largest European network of self-advocacy organisations of older people, our positions aim to reflect the situation at EU level on behalf of the 40 million older citizens represented by our members.
We very much welcome this opportunity to contribute to this consultation of the European Commission on a European Affordable Housing Plan.
This contribution is based on written answers received from organisations of older people in several EU Member States and on oral elements shared meetings of our task force dedicated to age-friendly environments.

Challenges and barriers faced by older persons to access affordable housing

Age discrimination and abuse

Our Czech member, Zivot 90, underlined that on the private/commercial real estate market, owners prefer to choose a young, promising person, who they assume will be able to react flexibly to any increase in the price of services or to repair something at home themselves, for example, without demanding it from the owner. In advertisements, they also often meet with a rejection of pets, which are often the only friend for older persons. Unfortunately, they noticed cases where the owner of the rented flat does not give the senior person a proper contract who then fails to receive housing benefits: the older person falls into a debt trap, having to choose between paying for rent and utilities, energy, or food and medicine. This leads to deteriorating health, reduced self-sufficiency, psychological difficulties and even social exclusion. It also often happens that a senior owns his/her own house, but after consulting his/her family (sometimes under pressure) he/she transfers the flat (house) to a relative with the hope that he/she will be able to live there. At that moment, the relationship is likely to be disturbed, and the senior risks being 'forced' to go to a care home.

Access to loan

This is an issue faced by many older people across Europe. The EU Directive on Residential Mortgage Credit Directive (2014)[1] stipulates that a home loan should be fully repaid during one's lifetime. The strict liability rules meant that it was no

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/banking-and-finance/consumer-finance-and-payments/retail-financial-services/credit/mortgage-credit_en. This Directive is currently under revision: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13090-Mortgage-credit-review-of-EU-rules/public-consultation_en

longer feasible for people aged 55+ to take out a loan to buy a retirement property or renovate their own home[2]. In Germany, a regulation that came into force in 2018, older private builders and buyers will be significantly better off, as this group of people will now also have better opportunities to conclude contracts with long-term fixed interest rates and loans with low repayment rates.

Accessibility

The lack of accessibility impedes the right of older people to be independent and to choose where to live. A number of older people are stuck within their dwelling because there is no lift, and/or depend on the support of carers to manage daily activities such as cooking or bathing. In extreme situations, the lack of accessible housing options and/or lack of financial support for necessary adaptations contributes to decisions to leave the family home (and the community) to enter residential facilities. In such cases older people will have to leave their dwelling and the community they live while it wouldn't be their primary choice. It is estimated that 70- 80% of existing building stock across Europe is unsuitable for independent living for an ageing population[3]. There is also a need to consider ageing in place not necessarily as a proxy to lifelong living dwelling but rather as a way to enable older people to age in a place that is right for them and enable them to be included in their community. This approach would help to consider solutions to answer the evolving needs across lifespan. Our German member, BAGSO, reports that older people often live in older residential buildings from the 20th century, from a time when the construction of barrier-free apartments and houses was rather secondary: the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency frequently registers complaints in this regard: Discrimination in access to housing is the most frequent request for advice in the area of goods and services. Another problem is that tenancy law stipulates those measures to create accessibility must be dismantled when moving out. In England, currently, 91% of homes do not provide even the most basic accessibility features and the Housing Made for Everyone - HoME[4]. Our members also refer to the fact that older person tend to live in dwelling which are not adapted to their needs, most of the time the house or appartement is too big, which notably impacts the energy bill, and/or is not accessible enough. Our Slovenian member, ZDUS, underlines that about 90% of retired people live in their own apartments and houses without major mortgage burdens. These units were built for the then young families and with the technology of the time, now renovations and adjustments are needed. There is strong expectations among

[2] In Germany, the Real Estate Credit Assessment Guidelines Regulation (ImmoKWPLV) of 24 April 2018 is particularly important since it was intended to mitigate the undesirable side effect of the above mentioned EU Directive.
[3] https://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-1560/ageing-well-at-home
[4] https://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-1560/ageing-well-at-home

people that their parents will leave their real estate to their descendants, which, in the absence of a state concept, does not accelerate the proper exchange of housing units. Thus, they are left alone in oversized flats and houses that are not adapted to their age - in one-member, even very poor households. The statistical fact measured in 2015 is that 65,000 older women live in independent poor single-member households. There are too few rented, affordable and residential-adapted dwellings (serviced and purpose-built and similar dwellings).
ILC -UK insists on the fact that older people need information on the housing options, such as tailored services, available when looking to relocate, to allow them to choose schemes that are right for them. To address this challenge, ILC-UK is calling for local councils to promote access to independent information and advice on the housing options available to older people in their local area. The report on the housing right for dependant older people (2018) carried out by the Association for active aging (Auser) in Italy highlights that in 2011 80.3% of people over 65 lived in owned houses. 80% of these houses, however, were built over 50 years ago, 7% don't have a heating system, and 56% of the building with multiple storeys don't have elevators.
The question of accessibility is actually strongly interrelated with participation as highlighted by Irene Lebrusán Murillo[5]: "However, even among researchers who had a great interest in the living conditions of older people and defended the importance of their social participation, the residential issue seemed to be a secondary issue, completely overlooked. How can a person who cannot go down the street participate in society? "

Poverty social exclusion[6]
They are multiple dimensions which are linked to different phenomena such as:

- the increase of prices on the real estate market: the German Center for Aging (DZA) researched on the impact of housing costs on the risk of poverty for older people. the together with the University of Neubrandenburg. They found out that the proportion of older people at risk of poverty after deduction of housing costs is seven percent higher than before deduction[7]. Our German member, BAGSO, report that affordable housing is not sufficiently available against the background of the tight situation on the housing market. The cost of housing has risen disproportionately in recent years, especially in cities. As a result, in particular older people with low incomes often find themselves having to leave their familiar living environment.
  The impact of tourism: as pointed out by our Greek member, 50+Hellas and our Portuguese member, Apre!, there is some sort of a competition

[5] https://cenie.eu/en/blogs/age-society/right-adequate-housing-also-exists-old-age
[6] AGE Platform Europe, "Older people also suffer because of the crisis" (2012)
[7] https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02673037.2021.1935759

due to tourism which is raising the price to buy or rent a dwelling in central city areas, on the seaside or other touristic destinations. Although not directly reported by our member, the gentrification process is somehow leading to similar situations. This puts at additional risk of poverty older people and can force them to move out; it can even lead to situations of elder abuse/exploitation where the relatives make the decision to rent the apartment or flat of their older parents because it is well located and force them to move to residential care services.

- Energy poverty: looking at affordability, older people living alone are also more likely to be impacted by energy poverty. In 2019 some 7.6% of EU-27 households were unable to keep their home adequately warm[8]. Our Greek member, 50+Hellas, highlights that 73.4% of people aged 65+ are living in own owned home, with a low percentage of them having still a mortgage (2020). But, the quality of these facilities is generally of low standard. The income of pensioners has been reduced during the 10-year-long economic crisis and no increases are allowed by law until the end of 2022. This means that most older people cannot afford to renovate their dwellings, although there are incentives to do so, including to install insulation, new heating systems, even smart technology. Our Portuguese member, Apre!, reports back a similar situation with even situation of older people dying of cold in their dwelling[9]. With the recent increase of energy prices, most of AGE members warn against the risks faced by older people either because there are already at risk of poverty or because these increases will put them at risk of poverty if they were not[10].

Specific groups among older people are more likely to be risk of poverty/social exclusion:

Older women

The so-called gender pension gap[11] puts at risk the right to access affordable and adequate housing of older women. It is therefore critical to gather data for this specific group and to consider adapted measures.

[8] https://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-1560/ageing-well-at-home
[9] Similar situation in the UK as reported in the report of Eurofound - https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1604en_0.pdf (page 61)
[10] See KBO-PCOB (NL) – Oct. 2021: https://www.kbo-pcob.nl/nieuws/peiling-kbo-pcob-senioren-ongerust-over-stijgende-energierekening/ and Zivot90 (CZ) – Nov. 2021: https://www.zivot90.cz/cs/pro-media/tiskove-zpravy/111-az-petine-seniorskych-domacnosti-hrozi-bytova
[11] https://www.age-platform.eu/international-womens-day-will-the-gender-pension-gap-be-closed-in-our-lifetimes/

Older people with immigrant background or refugees

In its report dedicated to ageing (2018)[12], the EU Fundamental Rights Agency underlined that "older people with migrant backgrounds are not a homogenous group, and their experiences and needs in older age may differ. However, evidence points that life trajectories of migrants are affected by "lower income, poorer working and housing conditions, including their concentration in low-income neighbourhoods". Such situations might place them at a disadvantage compared to those without migrant backgrounds. This results in social exclusion and worse socio-economic and health status".

In a blogpost written for our campaign "Ageing Equal"[13], ENIEC highlighted that " older migrants are a disadvantaged group in the Netherlands, in several fields such as housing, income, and health. (…) As far as housing is concerned, older migrants prefer living in their familiar environment for as long as possible. During the last few decades, the amount of information about initiatives offering people to stay home for the older migrants increased in dribs and drabs. Smaller multi-cultural services arose in their neighbourhoods thanks to civil-society organisations".

Older Roma: while we have little data regarding older Roma, still we have gathered some information with the support of ERGO: the deprived, rural and remote areas in which Roma people live – included sometimes in segregated neighbourhoods – make it more difficult to access basic goods or services. Older Roma are also in a significantly difficult income situation, given low employment rates and overrepresentation in precarious, low-paid work or atypical employment, which give access to no or poor pension entitlements[14].

Older people experiencing homelessness: Our Greek member, 50+ Hellas, underlines the growing number of older people experiencing homelessness in municipalities, like Athens. Many have inadequate pension contributions and try to survive while facing psychological problems. Accurate numbers are difficult to find but the stress of the 10 years of economic crisis certainly increased numbers.

The Irish member of FEANTSA highlights the sharp increase of people over 65 living in emergency accommodation: there were 119 in February 2018, a 40% increase on the February 2016 figure of 85 people. Likewise, numbers in England show that people over 60 are more than twice as likely to be homeless now than

[12] https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-fundamental-rights-report-2018-focus_en.pdf
[13] https://ageing-equal.org/housing-and-care-of-older-migrants/
[14] https://www.age-platform.eu/sites/default/files/AGE_BAROMETER_2020.pdf and https://ergonetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/9-Old-age-income-and-pensions-1.pdf

they were in 2009[15]. In Italy according to the latest official data of 2014 (ISTAT), there were 2.994 homeless people over 65 years, i.e. 5.9% of the total homeless population, while it was 5.3% in 2011 and despite the fact than more than half of the total homeless has foreign citizenship, the vast majority of older homeless is Italian. Based on data collected by fio.PSD (Italian Federation of Organisations working with Homeless People) with its associates, it appears that homeless people over 65 have increased in recent years.

Examples of alternative housing strategies for older persons

BAGSO, Germany: Lower Saxony Programme on Housing and Care in Old Age. It fosters new housing concepts to strengthen neighbourhoods and villages by unfolding the potential of the "we" - also for people with age-related limitations, illness or disability[16]. In Saxony, the Association of Saxony Housing Cooperatives (VSWG) have developped a key concept namely “Die Mitalternde Wohnung” (“The home ageing with you”)[17].

Vlaamse Ouderenraad[18], Belgium: (May 2021): Adapting and/or renovating your own home is not possible or desirable for all older people. Therefore, it should be easy, affordable and attractive to move to a custom home nearby. Communal housing projects are an interesting slope to be able to live independently for longer and to experience less feelings of loneliness. In a dossier we bundle several interesting articles about new forms of housing for older people.

ANAP, Italy: the project “Nostradomus - Residential care for the elderly”[19] was born from the will of Confartigianato Imprese Veneto and ANAP. A multi-year operational plan of actions aimed at supporting and promoting housing for older persons. In particular, the project aims to highlight the importance of aging in the home of older people and the importance of designing and adapting homes so that they can adapt to the needs of different life stages.

[15] https://ageing-equal.org/homelessness-is-not-only-about-housing/
[16] https://wohnenundpflege.fgw-ev.de/
[17] https://www.vswg.de/uploads/tx_nbpubshop/2012_03_20_Broschuere_AlterLeben.pdf
[18] https://www.ouderenraden.be/in-de-kijker/wonen/dossier-nieuwe-woonvormen-voor-ouderen?utm_source=Vlaamse+Ouderenraad&utm_campaign=5366b4420e-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_05_07_07_27&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_66ad0c5858-5366b4420e-136815758
[19] https://www.anap.it/mini-sito/veneto/notizia/nostra-domus-residenzialita-la-terza-eta

The publication developed by Social Housing Europe "Ageing Well At Home"[20], 2020 provides a wide range of example within the social housing sector:

- United Kingdom/Accessibility: concept of Lifetime Homes[21] which are ordinary homes designed to incorporate 16 Design Criteria that can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost so that they are suitable for all stages in life. However, keeping in mind that yearly new construction usually represents only around 1% of the total housing stock, it is clear how the key challenge remains the modernisation and adaptation of existing homes and buildings.
- Netherlands/ "right-sizing": In some cases, it's a matter of downsizing or actually 'right-sizing' as shown by the fact that more than half of older people in the EU are living in under-occupied dwellings. One interesting example from the Netherlands is that of Vidome[22] housing association in the Hague (Netherlands) that has set up a special real estate agent for elderly residents in order to help them find more suitable homes in terms of size and/or adaptation.
- Ireland/ "right-sizing": The Irish Council for Social Housing has also been working with approved housing bodies to promote innovative solutions to promote right-sizing[23].
- Sweden/tackle isolation: the Sällbo - community living project, run by Helsingborgshem public housing company in Helsingborg[24], has turned a former retirement home into a vibrant mixed housing complex where half of the residents are over 70 and the rest are aged 18-25; all residents are committed to spending time socialising with their neighbours.
- Belgium/tackle isolation: the Calico project developed by the Community Land Trust Brussels[25] was recently awarded EU funding from the Urban Innovative Action programme to create an inter-generational and socially diverse co-housing project built-in interaction with its neighbourhood.
- Belgium/tackle isolation: Biloba project[26] created senior housing with common facilities open to the whole neighbourhood thus fostering social networks.

[20] https://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-1560/ageing-well-at-home
[21] http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/
[22] https://dkvwg750av2j6.cloudfront.net/m/6c2c81c93f5a9522/original/Brochure-Aedes-Dutch-social-housing-in-a-nutshell-examples-of-social-innovation-for-people-and-communities-2016.pdf
[23] https://icsh.ie/resources/right-sizing-in-the-approved-housing-body-sector/
[24] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/15/its-like-family-the-swedish-housing-experiment-designed-to-cure-loneliness
[25] https://uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/brussels-capital-region
[26] https://www.housingevolutions.eu/project/house-biloba-a-highly-symbolic-housing-pilot-project/

FEANTSA has collected examples which put people experiencing homelessness at the centre:

- Italy : thanks to Ministry funding to tackle severe marginalisation, some cities such as Savona, Bergamo, Siena and Biella, Rome have launched Housing First and Housing led services also for homeless people over 65 years. Thanks to the Housing First project and intensive support in site, it was possible to obtain their registered residence, family doctor and social pension.
- In Ireland: as in the rest of Europe, population ageing is accompanied by social challenges of isolation and dependency, particularly for low-income older tenants. A significant number of people over the age of 65 are living in deprivation and 10.7%. The Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) acts as a national representative and advisory federation for approximately 270 affiliated housing associations and other voluntary organisations, providing over 35,000 homes to older people, homeless and vulnerable people, people with disabilities and individuals and families on low incomes. Many housing associations affiliated to the ICSH are providing high quality housing for low-income older people[27].
- Germany:

- Nettelbeckplatz: From Car Park to Community: this project has been developed in Berlin from 2014 to upgrade an existing housing block from the 1970s. The project has since been completed, providing the neighbourhood with new spaces that respond to the needs of a wide range of residents: the main features of the development include 10 assisted cluster apartments to allow older people who have lived in the block for decades to stay despite their changing living circumstances; student apartments to introduce a new user group to the scene and provide affordable housing currently unavailable on the market; a residential building replacing a former car park with 40 apartments and four commercial units; and finally a common space for everyone including a meeting room, a multifunctional space, a launderette, cafe and accessible toilets. The senior cluster apartments have been completed and a continued life with the required assistance has been established for the older tenants[28].
- Wohnen 60plus: Housing Security of Supply for Elderly Homeless People (Münster): the strained housing market in Münster entails very difficult conditions for tackling or ending homelessness in the city. There simply is not enough cheap and adequate housing available. That is why many older people in need of support spend a very long time, in many cases until the

[27] For more information: https://www.icsh.ie/, https://www.foldireland.ie/, https://mcauleyplace.ie/.
[28] https://www.vinzirast.at/projekte/vinzirastmittendrin/

end of their lives, in emergency shelters. With the support of a housing company as an investor, Förderverein für Wohnhilfen e.V. was able to convert a former church in the city of Münster in order to provide housing for older people who were previously living in emergency shelters. They built two residential floors with eight apartments and common areas as well as three floors for commercial tenants. All apartments are barrier-free and two are even wheelchair accessible[29]. Other areas of Germany are now developing similar projects.

You can stop the perpetuation of ageism!

Please read our one-pager on communicating on older persons in a non-stereotypical way.

About AGE Platform Europe

AGE Platform Europe is the largest European network of non-profit organizations of and for older people. We elevate older people's voice, bringing their experience and aspirations to the table to celebrate ageing and fight for equality at all ages.

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Transparency Register ID: 16549972091-86

[29] http://www.wohnhilfen-muenster.de/

Draft ID: 54d96298-fc9e-47ea-a37b-a5313eeb70be
Date: 09/10/2025 17:17:13

Open Public Consultation on the European Affordable Housing Plan

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

Housing affordability has become an increasingly widespread and urgent issue across Europe. Rising house prices and rents, interest rates, utility and renovations costs are affecting both low- and middle-income households, particularly in major cities and other growth poles. Vulnerable people suffer disproportionately from this situation, especially if they cannot access social housing and there is increased homelessness. Housing costs can also represent a major challenge for families, young people and those working in essential sectors such as healthcare, education, etc. A lack of affordable, sustainable and decent housing units, including from new construction, is hampering individual life chances, labour mobility and educational opportunity, hurting economic growth, competitiveness and social cohesion. Insufficient renovation and not making the most of existing building stock has a negative impact on achieving climate and energy goals.

Although mainly a Member State, regional and local competence, the European Commission plans to assess where added European value can be found by developing a new European approach to affordable and sustainable housing. To do this, the Commission is setting up a broad consultation - the affordable housing dialogue - to explore drivers of the current challenges, their impacts on various groups and sectors, and gather insights on potential solutions, including best practices.

The Commission seeks input from citizens and a wide range of stakeholders to help identify where EU-level action would add the most value. This public consultation, alongside expert seminars, workshops, and other themed consultation events will feed into the European affordable housing plan planned for adoption in the first quarter of 2026.

The public consultation on affordable housing consists of two sets of questions. One for the general public and one for public authorities, companies, associations and other stakeholders. You automatically receive the questions based on the information you provide in the following section ‘About you’.

A summary report will be published on the consultation page within 8 weeks after the closure of the public consultation. Moreover, a summary of the replies will be prepared.

About you

* Language of my contribution

- ○ Bulgarian
- ○ Croatian
- ○ Czech
- ○ Danish
- ○ Dutch
- ◉ English
- ○ Estonian
- ○ Finnish
- ○ French
- ○ German
- ○ Greek
- ○ Hungarian
- ○ Irish
- ○ Italian
- ○ Latvian
- ○ Lithuanian
- ○ Maltese
- ○ Polish
- ○ Portuguese
- ○ Romanian
- ○ Slovak
- ○ Slovenian
- ○ Spanish
- ○ Swedish

* I am giving my contribution as

- ○ Academic/research institution
- ○ Business association
- ○ Company/business

- ○ Consumer organisation
- ○ EU citizen
- ○ Environmental organisation
- ○ Non-EU citizen
- ◉ Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- ○ Public authority
- ○ Trade union
- ○ Other

* First name

Julia

* Surname

WADOUX

* Email (this won't be published)

julia.wadoux@age-platform.eu

* Organisation name

255 character(s) maximum

AGE Platform Europe

* Organisation size

- ○ Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- ◉ Small (10 to 49 employees)
- ○ Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- ○ Large (250 or more)

Transparency register number

Check if your organisation is on the transparency register. It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

16549972091-86

* Country of origin

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

This list does not represent the official position of the European institutions with regard to the legal status or policy of the entities mentioned. It is a harmonisation of often divergent lists and practices.

- Afghanistan
- Åland Islands
- Albania
- Algeria
- American Samoa
- Andorra
- Angola
- Anguilla
- Antarctica
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Aruba
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Djibouti
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Estonia
- Eswatini
- Ethiopia
- Falkland Islands
- Faroe Islands
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- French Guiana
- French Polynesia
- French Southern and Antarctic Lands
- Gabon
- Georgia
- Libya
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Macau
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Malta
- Marshall Islands
- Martinique
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Saint Martin
- Saint Pierre and Miquelon
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Samoa
- San Marino
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Singapore
- Sint Maarten
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
- South Korea
- South Sudan

- Belgium
- Belize
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Bonaire Saint Eustatius and Saba
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Bouvet Island
- Brazil
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Brunei
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Cape Verde
- Cayman Islands
- Germany
- Ghana
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Greenland
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Guam
- Guatemala
- Guernsey
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Heard Island and McDonald Islands
- Honduras
- Hong Kong
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Montenegro
- Montserrat
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar/Burma
- Namibia
- Nauru
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Niue
- Norfolk Island
- Northern Mariana Islands
- North Korea
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- The Gambia
- Timor-Leste
- Togo
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Türkiye
- Turkmenistan
- Turks and Caicos Islands

- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- China
- Christmas Island
- Clipperton
- Cocos (Keeling) Islands
- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo
- Cook Islands
- Costa Rica
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Croatia
- Cuba
- Curaçao
- Cyprus
- Czechia
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Denmark
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Israel
- Italy
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Jersey
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kiribati
- Kosovo
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Laos
- Latvia
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Palau
- Palestine
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Philippines
- Pitcairn Islands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Réunion
- Romania
- Russia
- Rwanda
- Saint Barthélemy
- Saint Helena Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States
- United States Minor Outlying Islands
- Uruguay
- US Virgin Islands
- Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu
- Vatican City
- Venezuela
- Vietnam
- Wallis and Futuna
- Western Sahara
- Yemen
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. **For the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, 'business association, 'consumer**

association', 'EU citizen') country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published. Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

* Contribution publication privacy settings

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

- ○ **Anonymous**

  Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.

- ◉ **Public**

  Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

☑ I agree with the personal data protection provisions

Questions for companies, businesses, public authorities, academics, research institutions, NGOs

Please choose the questions that are relevant for you or the sector you represent or work in. You are not obliged to answer all questions, e.g. if you are not concerned by a question or do not know the answer, simply skip the question.

1. What describes your or your organisation's field of work best?

- ○ Finance and investments
- ○ Construction and renovation activities
- ○ Manufacturing of building and renovation materials or appliances
- ◉ Working with other vulnerable people
- ○ Tenant organisation
- ○ Owner organisation

- Energy efficiency
- Commercial housing
- Social housing
- Spatial planning
- Architecture
- Working with homeless people
- Education and training
- Academia and research institution
- Healthcare
- Tourism
- Short-term rental platform
- Other

2. In which countries do you primarily operate?

- [x] All EU Member States
- [ ] Outside the EU
- [ ] Austria
- [ ] Belgium
- [ ] Bulgaria
- [ ] Croatia
- [ ] Cyprus
- [ ] Czechia
- [ ] Denmark
- [ ] Estonia
- [ ] Finland
- [ ] France
- [ ] Germany
- [ ] Greece
- [ ] Hungary
- [ ] Ireland
- [ ] Italy
- [ ] Latvia
- [ ] Lithuania
- [ ] Luxembourg
- [ ] Malta
- [ ] Netherlands
- [ ] Poland
- [ ] Portugal
- [ ] Romania
- [ ] Slovak Republic
- [ ] Slovenia
- [ ] Spain
- [ ] Sweden

Affordable and social housing

3. Do you consider that a common definition of affordable housing is needed in the EU?

- No, there are diverse approaches among Member States also due to cultural preferences or traditions, it is therefore not necessary or possible to have a common definition in the EU.
- (•) Some degree of convergence is needed in particular when there is public support involved.
- Yes, a common EU definition of affordable housing is necessary in all areas which would involve EU funding.
- Other

4. What would be the most important solution to significantly increase the supply of affordable housing over the short- and medium-term perspective?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- [ ] Make the construction sector more efficient and competitive
- [ ] Speed up permitting and reduce regulation in construction
- [x] Repurpose vacant buildings (e.g. from commercial use)
- [x] Map and reduce the number of homes that are vacant or underused
- [x] Expand affordable housing stock and improve its functioning
- [ ] Introduce minimum share of units priced below the market rate in new buildings
- [ ] Promote policies to increase the availability of land for residential development
- [ ] Use demand-side subsidies to enable reducing rents below market price e.g. for critical professions or young families
- [ ] Limit short-term accommodation rentals in areas where this limits supply of affordable housing for local people
- [ ] Limit financial speculation in the housing market
- [ ] Other

5. The EU building stock accounts for about 35% of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions also due to insufficient insulation. The use of materials for buildings can have a strong environmental impact. The choice of buildings can also severely affect soil health or water status, as well as the use of land in general. There are concerns that making such buildings more sustainable will make them less affordable.
Can you share good practices on solutions that combine sustainability and affordability?

300 character(s) maximum

6. What are the best ways to increase availability social housing*?

**Social housing is aimed at disadvantaged groups and allocated based on specific criteria, such as income, household size or health-related restrictions. Social housing systems and allocation criteria vary across Member States.*

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- [ ] Develop further partnerships with private sector especially with not-for-profit and /or for-limited profit organisations and social investors
- [ ] Promote cooperation with other social economy actors

- [ ] Promote renting mechanisms for social purposes with private owners such as social rental agencies
- [ ] Set up targets for the share of social housing in the local housing stock
- [ ] Increase public support for the development of social housing
- [ ] Plan social housing construction based on the current or projected housing needs
- [ ] Other

7. Do you know of any good or innovative practices that you would like to share on promoting affordable and social housing?
Please provide evidence if available.

300 character(s) maximum

8. What is the potential of cooperative or other alternative housing forms (e. g. community land trust) to increase affordable housing?
Can these approaches be scaled up?
Please provide evidence if available.

300 character(s) maximum

9. How can the different challenges facing urban and rural housing needs be addressed to improve access to affordable, sustainable and decent housing for all Europeans, including through spatial planning and financial support?

300 character(s) maximum

Financing

10. What are the biggest financial challenges in getting new affordable housing projects off the ground?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- [ ] Lack of long-term financing options
- [ ] Difficulty in understanding what financing opportunities are available

- [ ] Difficulties in accessing financial support (e.g. complex and lengthy application processes/lack of capacities)
- [ ] Unprofitable market segment / low returns in comparison to more profitable construction projects
- [ ] High upfront costs of construction, scarcity of materials
- [ ] High upfront costs of land
- [ ] Lack of access to tools that contain risks (guarantees, public co-investment)
- [ ] Other

11. What solutions would be most useful in overcoming these challenges for affordable housing projects?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- [ ] Ensure a level playing field with more profitable construction projects
- [ ] More availability of below market interest loans
- [ ] Risk-sharing mechanisms such as guarantees
- [ ] Combination of financial instruments with grants (blended finance)
- [ ] Equity investments
- [ ] Public-private partnership models
- [ ] Flexible financing options (e.g. longer loan maturities, lower upfront costs)
- [ ] Setting access rules for private investors and reserve a share of the building units for buyers with income below a certain ceiling
- [ ] More technical assistance for project development
- [ ] Promotion of new institutional actor, such as Limited-Profit Housing Associations, cooperatives, etc.
- [ ] Other

Please provide details and evidence if you have experience with any of the solutions selected above.

300 character(s) maximum

12. How can affordable housing investments be scaled up more effectively and funding and financial schemes improved?

300 character(s) maximum

13. How can financial incentives be best targeted and calibrated to help young people get access to housing?

300 character(s) maximum

14. How can the use of EU funds for affordable housing be improved in practice and be made more user-friendly?

300 character(s) maximum

State aid

Current State aid rules allow public support for social housing without the Commission's prior authorisation. However, Member States wishing to support affordable housing schemes generally need to notify their plans to the Commission in advance and obtain its authorisation.

15. Have you experienced any difficulties related to State aid when financing social housing projects?

- Yes
- No

16. Have you experienced any difficulties related to State aid rules when financing affordable housing projects with public resources?

- Yes
- No

17. Have you experienced any difficulties related to State aid rules when financing renovation projects?

- Yes
- No

18. The Commission will revise the State aid rules to allow support for affordable housing without the Commission's prior authorisation. Some

conditions may be attached to these new rules.

Which issues do you think that the Commission should bear in mind when designing State aid rules to establish affordable housing schemes?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- ☐ The price of the affordable housing
- ☐ The income of the occupants (in relation to the costs for occupying/buying the housing)
- ☐ The ownership of the housing units (e.g. to ensure that the homes built remain under public ownership or dedicated to social / affordable housing)
- ☐ The accessibility of the housing units (e.g. for persons with disabilities)
- ☐ Environmental performance (energy performance class of the housing units, environmental standards, climate resiliency, use of land, material and water)
- ☐ The social diversity of the occupants of the building
- ☐ The providers of the affordable housing
- ☐ Other

Construction

The EU construction sector faces several major structural challenges: low productivity, labour shortages, high construction costs and a significant environmental footprint.

19. Which factors do you consider most important to reduce costs and scale up building activity?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- ☐ Less red tape and reporting, faster planning and permitting
- ☐ Sustainable and energy efficient construction materials, circularity and waste reduction
- ☐ Innovative building techniques, e.g. prefabricated building renovation modules and off-site construction
- ☐ Full digitalisation of the value chain (construction products, permits, energy performance certificates, building logbooks, demolition audits)
- ☐ Improved access to finance, with longer maturity of loans and more guarantees
- ☐ Access to skilled workforce

- [ ] An efficient judiciary system to handle disputes, enforce contracts and ensure compliance with building codes and regulations
- [ ] Enhance the availability and reduce the cost of land designated for housing
- [ ] Public procurement (e.g. accelerated procedures, joint purchasing, digitalisation)
- [ ] Other

Please provide links or studies on good practices on any of the above

300 character(s) maximum

You can upload your file(s) here

Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed

20. In the context of its work on affordable housing, the Commission is developing a European Strategy on Housing Construction focusing on the supply side of the housing crisis.
What type of EU intervention do you consider necessary to help bring innovative building and renovation techniques and construction products to the market to increase housing affordability?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- [ ] Reduce the administrative burden related to public procurement and enable a preference for European products
- [ ] Develop the necessary standards under the new Construction Products Regulation to make it easier to sell novel construction products across the EU Single Market
- [ ] Create a Single Market for recycled construction materials and waste
- [ ] Work with financial institutions and industry to de-risk investments in innovative construction products and methods
- [ ] Work with public authorities to generate demand for transforming empty dwellings or office buildings
- [ ] No EU intervention is necessary
- [ ] Other

Please provide links or studies on good practices on any of the above

300 character(s) maximum

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Zoning and permitting

Land use, spatial planning and permitting for building and renovation are primarily a local and regional competence. A number of authorities across the EU are taking initiatives to make these steps less complex and lengthy.

21. What are the main challenges to obtaining a permit during the zoning and spatial planning phase?

300 character(s) maximum

22. What is the average time to receive a building permit in your city/region /country?

100 character(s) maximum

23. When it comes to land use, spatial planning and permitting, what type of measures should public authorities prioritise to increase the supply of affordable housing?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- ☐ Implement efficient land use policies, for example identifying areas suitable for housing projects not expected to have a significant environmental impact
- ☐ Focus on administrative capacity building (e.g. staff, more centralisation, digitalisation) of public authorities in charge of issuing permits
- ☐ Simplify building codes
- ☐ Simplify zoning and permitting requirements
- ☐ Allow fast track for renovation or repurposing project
- ☐ Allow higher density construction in residential or industrial areas

- [ ] Accelerate permitting procedures (e.g. with streamlined procedures for prefabricated housing, district-level renovations, or repurposing of buildings)
- [ ] Introduce single environmental assessments across an entire area for new developments
- [ ] Design policies that reconcile affordability with accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities and older persons
- [ ] Explore ways to streamline public appeals (e.g. eligibility criteria, time limits) without compromising citizens' rights to challenge decisions
- [ ] Other

24. How could the EU support Member States in simplifying and accelerating land use, spatial planning and permitting?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- [ ] Support Member States in the implementation of EU legislation with an impact on land use and spatial planning
- [ ] Facilitate exchange of best practice among public authorities
- [ ] Provide recommendations and technical assistance on efficient land use and spatial planning policies for housing affordability
- [ ] Offer guidance on how to reconcile housing as an overriding public interest with other objectives such as 'No Net Land Take'
- [ ] Present new EU legislation to accelerate planning and permitting for housing projects
- [ ] Make EU funding for housing conditional upon fulfilment of relevant reforms in a Member State
- [ ] EU action is not necessary
- [ ] Other

Please provide links or studies on good practices on any of the above

300 character(s) maximum

You can upload your file(s) here

Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed

Repurposing, densification and vacant properties

There are many vacant industrial, commercial, residential, institutional, or historical buildings which could be repurposed or renovated to better meet affordable housing needs. Converting existing buildings reduces the need for new construction and related carbon emissions, land use and infrastructure costs, and negative impact on climate change resilience and biodiversity through new land take. It can also help revitalise neighbourhoods and generate demand for new services.

25. Do you see obstacles in repurposing and renovating vacant buildings?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- ☐ High costs
- ☐ Complexity in changing the designation of an area from commercial or industrial use to residential use
- ☐ Length of time to receive a permit to repurpose/renovate vacant building
- ☐ Difficulty to adapt post-industrial/commercial and institutional buildings for residential purposes
- ☐ Need to comply with legal requirements / building standards
- ☐ Ownership related issues and other legal complexities
- ☐ Location in low demand area or are with lack of services
- ☐ No obstacles
- ☐ Other

26. How should public authorities best support the repurposing of vacant buildings?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- ☐ Ensure a comprehensive inventory of buildings, their state and their occupancy
- ☐ Adjust zoning policies, reform building standards and streamline the permitting process for reconversions or repurposing of buildings, reducing bureaucratic hurdles and delays
- ☐ Offer funding, subsidies or tax incentives to facilitate renovation and repurposing of unused buildings
- ☐ Impose additional taxation on unused buildings
- ☐ Mandatory evaluation of building reversibility before demolition, including its integration

- [ ] Invest in research on new renovation techniques which offer cost and time savings and reduce waste
- [ ] Promote mixed use of buildings (supermarket combined with housing etc.)
- [ ] Raise public awareness about the benefits of reconversion and engage with local communities
- [ ] Other

27. How could the EU support Member States' efforts to repurpose vacant buildings?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- [ ] Facilitate the use of the EU Building Stock Observatory to provide data and information on the EU's building stock, including energy consumption and renovation rates, and develop criteria on what constitutes vacancy
- [ ] Ensure that EU legislation on renovation of buildings facilitates the repurposing of buildings
- [ ] Facilitate exchange of best practice
- [ ] Provide recommendations and technical assistance on repurposing and renovation of unused buildings
- [ ] Devote specific funding streams (e.g. New European Bauhaus, Affordable Housing Initiative) to repurposing and densification
- [ ] EU action is not necessary
- [ ] Other

28. How should illegal occupation and squatting be best addressed by the responsible public authorities?

300 character(s) maximum

Please provide links or studies on good practices on any of the above

300 character(s) maximum

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Simplification

The Commission has identified speed, coherence and simplification as key political priorities, and is focusing on reducing administrative burdens and simplifying implementation: less red tape and reporting, more trust, better enforcement, faster permitting.

29. Have you identified any overlapping, unnecessary or disproportionate EU rules that create barriers to the supply of affordable housing?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

30. Have you identified any national, regional or local rules that create unnecessary barriers to the supply of affordable housing? If yes, which ones?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Labour shortages, skills and working conditions

Construction trades (e.g. plumbers, electricians, bricklayers) are among the occupations which face the most widespread shortages in Europe. Delivering affordable housing also means addressing labour shortages and developing the skills for new building techniques – from construction workers to architects and engineers, from real estate developers to urban planners and local administrations.

31. What measures do you think that public authorities in the Member States should prioritise to address labour shortages in construction trades?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- ☐ Increase the attractiveness, quality and number of offers in Vocational Education and Training programmes to help individuals gain the skills necessary for the construction job market
- ☐ Improve working conditions in the construction sector to make it more attractive, including for young people and women

- [ ] Stimulate upskilling and reskilling along the construction value chain to match the knowledge gap (e.g. in digital technologies, advanced manufacturing, off-site construction, hybrid techniques combining timber and concrete, integration of technologies such as heat pumps and renewables)
- [ ] Invest in capacity and skills in public administrations and urban planners through targeted training and exchange programmes
- [ ] Other

32. Can you share good practices on solutions that address labour shortages in construction trades?
Please provide evidence if available.

300 character(s) maximum

33. Do you think that the EU should take additional measures to address labour shortages in construction trades?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- [ ] Improve the recognition of professional qualifications and skills
- [ ] Better enforce existing legislation on labour law and free movement in the EU
- [ ] Address the potential of legal migration from non-EU countries to help host EU countries address labour market needs through easier recognition of professional qualifications
- [ ] Tackle specific authorisation or certification requirements that prevent qualified services providers (e.g. construction workers, electrical, gas or solar panel installation services) from providing services in another EU country
- [ ] Promote and support the social dialogue between employers and employees in construction to contribute to improving working conditions in the sector
- [ ] Other

Rental market, short-term accommodation rentals and tourism, secondary homes

Short-term rentals via online platforms have experienced fast growth and now represent around one quarter of the total EU supply of tourist accommodation.

34. Do you see an impact of short-term rentals in your country, region or city?

If yes, please describe the impact and the context (e.g. capital city, rural area, touristic region). Please provide quantified evidence if available.

300 character(s) maximum

Yes, in Portugal and in Greece, our members are reporting such issues. Older people may be forced to move out when the relatives make the decision to rent the apartment or flat of their older parents that is well located and can bring interesting incomes. This leads for financial elder abuse.

You can upload your file(s) here

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A new EU Regulation applicable from May 2026 ('Short Term Accommodation Rentals Regulation') will increase transparency requirements for hosts, giving more information on the location and duration of short-term rentals, allowing public authorities to take proportionate measures when necessary. And new EU tax rules will also require digital platforms to report income earned by hosts and to charge and collect VAT on behalf of the hosts. Meanwhile, a number of public authorities in the Member States are restricting short-term rentals.

35. In your view, what else should be done at EU level to address the issue of short-term accommodation rentals?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- ☐ There is no need for additional EU policy intervention – the priority now should be to implement the new Short Term Accommodation Rentals Regulation, making sure that it generates relevant data and clamping down on illegal listings
- ☐ The EU and Member States should gather additional economic evidence on the impact of short-term rentals on housing affordability
- ☐ The EU should facilitate the exchange of best practice based on an assessment of the legal and economic impact of various policies, including taxation
- ☐ The EU should support measures to diversify tourism flows so that the benefits of tourism are spread more sustainably and the disadvantages of overtourism in certain hotspots are reduced
- ☐ Strengthen EU-level regulation of short-term accommodation
- ☐ The EU should take enforcement action against unjustified and disproportionate restrictions on short-term accommodation rentals
- ☐ There is no need for any further policy intervention

- [ ] Other

36. Do you have good practice examples and ideas of policies that balance short-term rentals better with needs for long-term housing?
Please specify and provide evidence if available.

300 character(s) maximum

37. A secondary home is a property where people spend time away from their primary home. Secondary homes may be rented out for certain periods (short-term rentals) or may be primarily used by the owners. There are concerns that secondary homes can make housing less affordable for local residents, and/or can contribute to vacant housing stock.
Do you see an impact of secondary homes in your country or region?
If yes, please describe the impact and the context (e.g. capital city, rural area, touristic region).

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

38. What policy intervention do you consider most effective in encouraging more efficient use of properties owned as secondary homes that are underused?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- [ ] Introduce an additional property taxation for secondary homes (e.g. for homes occupied for less than xx days a year)
- [ ] Provide incentives to renting secondary homes for certain periods of the year
- [ ] Limit the number of secondary homes in certain areas
- [ ] Ensure equal treatment for second homeowners (including across borders, e.g. buyers of secondary home in a country different from a country of first residence vs buyers of secondary home in the same country as the first residence)
- [ ] Other

39. What additional aspects should be considered to ensure the proper functioning of the rental market?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- [ ] Increase property taxation
- [ ] Reduce taxation of rental incomes
- [ ] Promote transparent and enforceable rental agreements, notably through standardised documentation and appropriate registration mechanisms
- [ ] Design fiscal or regulatory incentives that favour long-term rental contracts over short-term or tourist rentals, helping stabilise supply for residents
- [ ] Enhance protection of tenants through measures such as open-ended rental contracts, and publicly available register including rental prices
- [ ] Support rent guarantee schemes
- [ ] Introduce rent caps
- [ ] Other

Financialisation* and speculation

** Financialisation: Treating housing as a financial asset for investment and profit, rather than primarily as a place to live.*

40. Do you think that buying homes primarily for resale at a higher price contributes to rising housing costs?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

41. Should commercial ownership of housing in a defined geographical area be limited or discouraged?

- ○ Very much agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ No opinion

43. What would be the impact of measures to limit the ownership of housing units by financial firms, for instance on rental supply and rental prices or on the returns for small investors in investment portfolios?
Please provide evidence, if available.

300 character(s) maximum

44. Do you think vacant properties should be taxed or regulated to encourage owners to put them on the market?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Inclusiveness

45. Should any target group(s) be prioritised by the European affordable housing plan?
If yes, please explain which one(s) and why.

300 character(s) maximum

Yes, starting with people experiencing homeleness. The point is to ensure equity and beyond this group, it is mainly a matter of income and individual situation. For instance, older people also face issues such energy poverty, inadequate or inaccessible dwelling.

46. How can young people be most effectively supported both as renters and as first-time owners?

300 character(s) maximum

47. What actions could be taken to improve the accessibility of housing for persons with disabilities and older persons?

Maximum 2 selection(s)

- ☑ Earmark funding for accessibility
- ☑ Improve the skills of construction professionals on accessibility
- ☐ Improve legal certainty on the requirements for accessible housing
- ☐ Other

48. What could be done to ensure equal access to quality housing and independent living for groups at risk of discrimination (based on racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics etc.)?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- [ ] Strengthen national anti-discrimination laws in housing and ensuring effective enforcement of existing legislation
- [ ] Provide legal aid and support services to individuals affected by housing discrimination
- [x] Tackle housing segregation by supporting the development of inclusive housing projects for groups at risk of discrimination
- [ ] Reserve a proportion of public or social housing for groups at risk of discrimination
- [x] Support access to credit and housing loans for groups at risk of discrimination
- [ ] Fund transitional housing and shelters for those in precarious situations
- [ ] Run public awareness campaigns on housing rights and anti-discrimination
- [ ] Foster the exchange of best practices among Member States on inclusive practices
- [x] Encourage cooperation between public authorities, civil society, and community groups
- [ ] Other

49. How could housing policies and investments contribute to the fight against homelessness, both in terms of prevention and of ensuring sustainable housing solutions for homeless people?

Maximum 3 selection(s)

- [ ] Rental market regulation to ensure greater fairness and inclusiveness, in particular with respect to evictions
- [ ] Provide more efficient and timely support services (debt counselling, mediation services, financial support and other) to people at risk of eviction
- [ ] Ensure housing assistance for the most vulnerable in the form of adequate housing benefits/allowances
- [ ]

- [ ] Ensure social and public housing is adequate and the allocation system prioritises homeless people
- [ ] Create a favourable environment to attract social impact investments by the private sector in the area on housing, which could benefit homeless people
- [ ] Other

Governance

50. Housing is impacted by a very wide range of policies which can be set at local, regional, national or even EU level.
What would be the best way to work together across all these levels to improve the affordability of housing and disseminate good practices?

300 character(s) maximum

Closing questions

51. Do you wish to remain available for further questions via the email address you provided?

- (•) Yes
- ( ) No

52. Do you wish to upload a file to provide additional information or a more comprehensive explanation (e.g. position papers)?

Only files of the type pdf,doc,docx,odt,txt,rtf are allowed

Contact

ENER-TF-HOUSING@ec.europa.eu

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AGEING IS LIVING: HOW TO RESHAPE HEALTH SYSTEMS – KEY INSIGHTS FROM AGE PRESIDENT AT WHO EUROPE SESSION

4 February 2025



Our President, Dr. Heidrun Mollenkopf, was one of the speakers at WHO Europe (https://www.who.int/europe/home?v=welcome)**'s session on ageing, which was part of a series of hearings contributing to the development of the second European Programme of Work, 2025–2030, ensuring that it addresses key health challenges and promotes equity and resilience.**

This session brought together Member States, partners, and civil society representatives to explore how Europe's demographic shifts, including population ageing and changing urban–rural dynamics, are reshaping health systems, identify strategic reforms, and promote meaningful participation to guide policies well beyond 2030.

> *"We need to consider the diversity of ageing and old age, recognise older people's experiences and life achievements, appreciate their many contributions to the functioning and cohesion of society, and dismantle all forms of ageism and age discrimination, especially in the health and care systems."*
>
> 
>
> **Heidrun Mollenkopf, President of AGE Platform Europe**

To start the hearing, **Dr. Hans Kluge**, Regional Director of WHO Europe, underlined the need for a paradigm shift, insisting that **ageing is not a disease but a privilege**. He stressed the need to debunk certain myths, including the importance of prevention (even

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for dementia) and the fact that **ageing, in itself, is not the primary driver of costs**. He also emphasised the necessity of a whole-of-society approach to ensure dignity and social connection, focusing on the contributions older people can make.

> *"Older people must be included as equal partners in shaping, implementing, and monitoring all policies, laws, and programmes that affect their health and well-being."*
>
>  **Heidrun Mollenkopf, President of AGE Platform Europe**

Following his remarks, keynote speakers discussed the societal and economic changes required to support healthy, productive ageing. This was followed by a panel of experts from across Europe who shared their perspectives on addressing these challenges.

5 Key Aspects for Reshaping Health Systems

Dr. Heidrun Mollenkopf, President of AGE Platform Europe, highlighted five key aspects essential **to a health strategy under the motto "Ageing is Living,"** emphasising that this demographic change requires government institutions to make major adjustments in all areas to maintain a balance between all the generations:

1. Adopt a life-course approach.
2. Understand health comprehensively.
3. Change the deficit-oriented narrative around ageing to one based on equality and human rights.
4. Enable access and participation for older people.
5. Take the "Ageing is Living" slogan seriously.

> *"If we opt for a life course approach and take the "Ageing is Living" slogan seriously, health should encompass more than just the absence of illness. (...) Political measures must also encompass such key areas of life as economic security, basic and continuing education, healthy nutrition, work and leisure opportunities, housing and mobility, urban and transport planning - and, as mentioned before, health-related prevention and medical, long-term and palliative care as well as adequate rehabilitation – all of which is equally substantial for healthy ageing. It also requires making older people visible in data and statistics by creating and making available a broad, disaggregated database to be able to plan and implement targeted measures for specific situations that may arise in the course of ageing." Dr. Heidrun Mollenkopf, President of AGE Platform Europe*
>
>  **Heidrun Mollenkopf, President of AGE Platform Europe**

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0:03 / 2:37

Ageing is not a syndrome or a disease.

Check out this inspiring video from **WHO Regional Office for Europe** where people of all ages share what they think ageing is.

The hearings are a new initiative of WHO/Europe to gather as many inputs as possible from the European general public, civil society, partners, stakeholders and governments about what they think the new EPW should be all about.

A new strategy for WHO/Europe—about people, for people's better health, and with inputs from those it's meant to be about.

Find out more (https://www.who.int/europe/activities/developing-the-second-european-programme-of-work)

The feedback gathered at the hearing will contribute to the development of the second **European Programme of Work, 2025–2030** (EPW2).

Explore the other hearings organised by WHO Europe here (https://www.who.int/europe/about-us/our-work/second-european-programme-of-work-2026-2030/epw2-hearings).

Watch the session
(HTTPS://EVENTS.ZOOM.US/EV/ANMM7ZC6-ALDDQB51SF0VZ8MU0VF69A9LC7CJDQH5YRFHCTGHDST~ASLFEGFE3DF904BFJFU0SMRX5JGB5R202E9NFT0PZ0CF

Important: Register by email and follow the instructions provided to watch the session.

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USEFUL LINKS

- ✓ WHO Europe - Developing the second European Programme of Work (https://www.who.int/europe/activities/developing-the-second-european-programme-of-work)

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Across the city, people of all generations are gathering to take part in projects where they can work together, dance,...

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ADOPTION OF THE NEW EU DRIVING LICENCE RULES: DESPITE SOME PROGRESS, WE REGRET THE INCLUSION OF UNJUSTIFIED AGE LIMITS

7 November 2025



After more than two years of legislative process, the revised EU

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driving licence rules have been adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. These rules are part of a road safety package (https://transport.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/european-commission-proposes-updated-requirements-driving-licences-and-better-cross-border-2023-03-01_en) presented by the Commission in March 2023, which aims to improve safety for all road users and to move as close as possible to zero fatalities in EU road transport by 2050 ("Vision Zero (https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/index_en)").

The new directive is now published in the Official Journal of the European Union (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202502205) and Member States have three years to transpose these new provisions into national law and an additional year to prepare for their implementation.

Regarding the **format of the driving licence**, while we would have prefer to see the physical format issued by default, we consider the final text to be an acceptable compromise. Member States will have to issue a digital version by end 2031. This will become the default version, still drivers will have the right to request of the issuance of the licence in physical format. It shall be underlined that Recital 13 of the directive asks Member States to take "due care not to influence the free choice of citizens in relation to driving licence formats by establishing disproportionate administrative fees unduly favouring one format over the other."

We are much more disappointed by the inclusion of age limits to limit the administrative validity of the driving licence. On one hand side, the European Parliament and the Council recongnise the fact that mental and physical fitness to drive is not per se age related by applying minimum standards each time a licence is renewed. They also removed ageist provision in the annex III defining the minimum physical and mental standards of fitness to drive. Still there is a provision enabling Member States to limit the administrative validity of the driving licence from the age of 65.

We now call on Member States to not include such provision since, as clearly stated in a report of the European Transport Safety Council (https://bit.ly/3y9YqmL) (2021) mandatory age-based screening of older drivers has not

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been shown to be effective in preventing severe collisions.

Contact



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USEFUL LINKS

- ✓ Driving Licences: unjustified age limits in the provisional agreement reached by the European Parliament and the Council (https://www.age-platform.eu/driving-licences-unjustified-age-limits-in-the-provisional-agreement-reached-by-the-european-parliament-and-the-council/)
- ✓ Official communication of the Council of the European Union (https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/03/25/council-and-parliament-strike-provisional-agreement-on-new-rules-for-driving-licences/%20)
- Official communication of (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-

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	the European Parliament	room/20250324IPR27462/road-safety-deal-for-modern-eu-driving-licence-rules)
✓	Official communication of the European Commission	(https://transport.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/commission-welcomes-provisional-agreement-modernised-driving-licences-rules-2025-03-25_en)
✓	EU Annual Statistical Report on Road Safety, April 2025	(https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/european-road-safety-observatory/data-and-analysis/annual-statistical-report_en)

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