

Summary

Second Substantive Session on the UN Convention (26-30 October)

AGE Platform Europe

10 November 2026

www.age-platform.eu

AGE and its members help shape the future UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons



The second session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Human Rights of Older Persons (IGWG) took place in Geneva from 26 to 30 October 2026.

Following the first substantive session of the IGWG held in July 2026, discussions have continued to draft the content of the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons. The discussions brought together Member States, civil society organisations (CSOs), National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), equality bodies, UN agencies and older persons themselves to shape the content of the future legally binding instrument (LBI). 12 AGE members participated in the session, demonstrating strong commitment to shaping the future Convention.

This is an unofficial summary of the second session of the IGWG and AGE's inputs.

What Has Been Discussed?

The session has discussed:

- The elements of the Preamble;
- Definitions;
- State obligations;
- Catalogue of rights;
- Elements relating to implementation, monitoring and international cooperation.

Day 1

The week began with a well-attended NGO preparatory meeting organised by the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP) and the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva, with the participation of CSOs and NHRIs. Following presentations by Argentina, and the Secretariat of the Intergovernmental working group on how civil society can best engage in this process, our Head of Advocacy, Nena Georgantzi, presented GAROP's new Discussion Papers, which aimed at supporting common messaging and civil society participation in the week ahead. Three short workshops allowed participants to discuss further elements that could be included in GAROP's positions, how to effectively work together as a coordinated CSO caucus and how to support newcomers.

In the afternoon, the official session started with the **General Debate**. The room was full of representatives of Member States. Many Member States reiterated the importance of ensuring the meaningful participation of older persons throughout the drafting process. The European Union delivered a statement emphasising that the Convention should be grounded in a human rights-based approach, recognising older persons as rights holders. The EU also stressed that the future instrument should be fully aligned with existing international human rights law and strengthen - rather than weaken - existing standards.

Among Member States, there was broad consensus on the importance of participation of older persons and the recognition that older persons are not a homogeneous group.

Day 2

The **General Debate** continued on the second day, when CSOs and NHRIs had the opportunity to take the floor. Several AGE members, as well as AGE's Secretary General, Maciej Kucharczyk, took the floor to stress the importance of placing older persons at the center of the negotiations.



"We, older people, must be meaningfully involved in all steps of negotiations, with equal opportunities to share our lived experiences, expectations and aspirations during drafting sessions. Older people are by far the best experts in ageing. Our lived experience is exactly what can help anchor this convention in everyday people's reality."

Maciej Kucharczyk, Secretary General of AGE Platform Europe

These are just a handful of developments, but they demonstrate just how important an ambitious, stand-alone treaty is, with effective guarantees that all human rights of older persons are respected. Not with general declarations, but with rights, enforceable rights. Not with soft recommendations, but with rules, enforceable rights. And not through weakened and simplified oversight on the respect of these rights, but through effective guarantees at the national and international levels for their implementation—which, for older persons, may under no circumstances be weaker than what is provided for children, women, and persons with disabilities."

Chris Serroyen, OKRA, AGE member



While discussing elements of the **Preamble**, one of the recurring points was the importance of meaningful participation. This was explored further during a side event organised by the Government of Germany and German National Human Rights Institute, where participants examined how older persons should be involved throughout the drafting process of the Convention.

There was broad agreement that the **Preamble** should clearly articulate the purpose of the treaty and firmly anchor it within the international human rights framework. Many Member States, CSOs and NHRIs emphasised that the Convention should reinforce existing human rights standards and several delegations referred to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as an important source of inspiration and reference.



"It seems incredible that in 2026 we still need to recall that older persons are rights holders who have the right to full legal capacity, and who are entitled to enjoy the full range of human rights and fundamental freedoms guaranteed under international, regional and national law."

Anna Biondi, Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro, AGE member

Day 3

Discussions on **definitions** generated more diverse views. CSOs and NHRIs repeatedly stressed that the definition should not be tied to a fixed chronological age threshold.

AGE highlighted that relying on a strict age threshold risk reinforcing age-based assumptions and stereotypes, with the risk to undermine the paradigm shift the Convention seeks to achieve. Older age is not experienced uniformly, and the realities of ageing vary significantly across individuals, cultures, and society. A purely chronological approach could considerably narrow the scope of protection and fail to address the structural barriers older people face.

"Older age is a social construct – its meaning is shaped by social and cultural norms, not by a number. Ageism and denial of rights on the basis of known, perceived or imputed older age do not begin at any single age. A fixed threshold would leave people unprotected – for example those displaced in humanitarian contexts who face challenges associated with older age."

Jürgen Focke, HelpAge Deutschland, AGE member



Discussions on **State obligations** focused on the responsibilities of Member States as the primary duty bearers under the future Convention.



"The treaty must establish general State obligations that remain effective in the face of evolving social, demographic, environmental, scientific and technological developments. Such developments may create new challenges and gaps in the promotion and protection of human rights in older age. The treaty must therefore establish a durable framework that enables States to respond to emerging risks and changing circumstances. This should include reviewing and, where necessary, adapting their laws, policies and practices to ensure the continued effective enjoyment of human rights by older persons."

Ina Volcker, BAGSO, AGE member

Day 4

Discussions on the list of rights favoured a comprehensive rather than a narrow understanding of issues that should be covered by the treaty, including among others, equality and non-discrimination, care, autonomy, participation, employment and social protection, freedom from abuse, violence and neglect. This meeting also provided an opportunity for States to reiterate the importance of a list of rights that is comprehensive, specific and non-regressive. Many States also reaffirmed the universality, indivisibility and independence of rights and stressed that the forthcoming should build on existing standards and not regress. Several speakers also mentioned that the treaty should reflect new societal challenges, including among others digitalisation and climate change.

« Renforcer les droits des personnes âgées, c'est entretenir cette lueur de vie et d'humanité qui nous relie tous et toutes, à travers les générations. »

[Translation: "Strengthening the rights of older people means keeping alive that spark of life and humanity that connects us all, across the generations."]

Eliane Rey, Conseil Suisse des Ainés, AGE member



The discussions on **monitoring** demonstrated a considerable level of divergence among Member States on how the treaty implementation should be reviewed. Some favoured a dedicated treaty body, while others raised concerns about the capacity and efficiency of the current monitoring mechanisms and preferred lighter reporting obligations. NHRIs and Equality Bodies alongside many NGOs stressed that the treaty needs to have a robust and effective review body followed by a national monitoring framework, similar to the one established by the CRPD.

AGE, while remained open to the actual design of the dedicated mechanism, raised caution about assuming that merely using the existing system will be sufficient and stressed that organisations of older persons must have a meaningful role in implementation and monitoring.



"We fully support mainstreaming older persons' rights across the human rights system. However, adding responsibilities to the existing overstretched bodies is not necessarily the most efficient option to achieve this. A dedicated Convention and monitoring body would provide the expertise, visibility and guidance needed to advance mainstreaming across the system."

Nena Georgantzi, Head of Advocacy of AGE Platform Europe

Day 5

At the closing meeting, **Brazil's Permanent Representative was appointed Chair of the IGWG for 2027**, succeeding Argentina. Five pairs of co-facilitators were also appointed to lead consultations on the five thematic areas of the future instrument: the Philippines and Serbia on the Preamble, Slovenia and Uruguay on Definitions, The Gambia and Qatar on State Obligations Australia and Brazil on Catalogue of Rights, and Malta and Lesotho on Monitoring.

Under the proposed timeline, **a call for inputs on the five thematic** areas has been planned for November 2026 and is already open. The call for inputs focuses on the five segments of the treaty discussed in October and will inform the cofacilitators' work expected to take place the first semester of 2027. The contributions should be sent by email by 18 December 2026 to the Secretariat (OHCHR-IGWG-HROP@un.org).

Intersessional consultations on these elements are expected from January to May 2027, providing further opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to the development of the future Convention.

The co-facilitators will work towards presenting a draft outline of the Convention ahead of the next this session, scheduled for July 2027, while a **zero draft of the treaty is envisaged by October 2027**.

The timeline ahead of us promises to be a busy one. A great deal of work remains ahead, but this reflects the strong momentum and growing commitment in drafting a UN Convention that will enable us to fully enjoy all our rights when we are older.

These upcoming milestones will be crucial in translating discussions and proposals into a concrete treaty text. AGE Platform Europe and its members will continue to actively engage throughout this process, bringing their expertise, experience and the perspectives of older people to the negotiations.

More information

AGE Oral Statements

- General debate
- Preamble
- Definitions
- Catalogue of Rights
- Elements relating to implementation, monitoring and international cooperation

Other useful resources

- AGE Platform Europe webpage on the UN convention
- AGE's contribution to the UN call for inputs
- GAROP Discussion Papers on the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons – Elements of the Preamble
- GAROP Discussions Papers on the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons – State obligations
- GAROP Discussions Papers on the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons – The Scope of the Treaty
- GAROP Discussions Papers on the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons – Catalogue of Rights
- IGWG webpage (including statements and official documents)
- Call for pledges to support the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons
- Equinet contribution to the IGWG2
- Equinet key recommandations

Contact

For more information, contact:
- Apolline Parel, Human Rights Officer at apolline.parel@age-platform.eu
- Nena Georgantzi, Head of Advocacy at nena.georgantzi@age-platform.eu

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.

Av de Tervueren, Tervurenlaan 168, box 2
- 1150 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32.2.280.14.70
info@age-platform.eu

WWW.AGE-PLATFORM.EU

Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Transparency Register ID: 16549972091-86