



**AGE Platform Europe**

The voice of older persons at EU level



# **State of Art in Europe: Non-discrimination and rights of older LGBTI people**

28 February 2019, Best4OlderLGBTI, Porto, Portugal  
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# AGE Platform Europe – What we are



**A rights' based  
Network**



**of some 120  
senior persons'  
NGOs in Europe**



**Representing  
some 40 million  
persons aged 50+**



**Advocating for  
+/- 200 million  
citizens aged 50+  
in EU**



**And building  
together a  
society for all  
ages**

# AGE Platform Europe

**Nothing about us without us**

**Towards a global response to ageing**

- Promoting **equal rights** when ageing
- Taking account of the **socio-economic realities** in which older people live and age
- Promoting **age-friendly environments** and universal design and standardization

**A NEW -ISM...**

# 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

The term “**ageism**” was coined in 1969 by Robert N. Butler, then a 42-year-old psychiatrist who headed the District of Columbia Advisory Committee on Ageing

*“Ageism can be seen as **a systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people** because they are old, just as **racism and sexism** accomplish this with skin colour and gender...”*

*Robert Neil Butler*



# AGEISM 1969-2019...

Robert N. Butler was not the first to identify a seemingly universal, widespread contempt for old people:

- *Men and women who no longer could contribute to communal survival in Neolithic cultures were cast aside, often left to die*
- *“Senectus morbidus est” (Old age is a disease), Seneca, 4 BC–AD 65*



**However, Butler's achievement was to give meaning to ageism as an affliction**

# WHO DEFINITION



**Stereotyping – how we think**

**Prejudice – how we feel**

**Discrimination – how we act**

# ARE YOU AGEIST?

1. People who work past 65 are clogging up the job pipeline
2. You can't teach an old dog new tricks
3. **Older people are too sensitive**
4. **Age discrimination isn't a real thing**
5. Retirement villages are great places for older people



# Ageism goes both ways



Young people may be affected by ageism too, even though reality tends to show that older people are more so

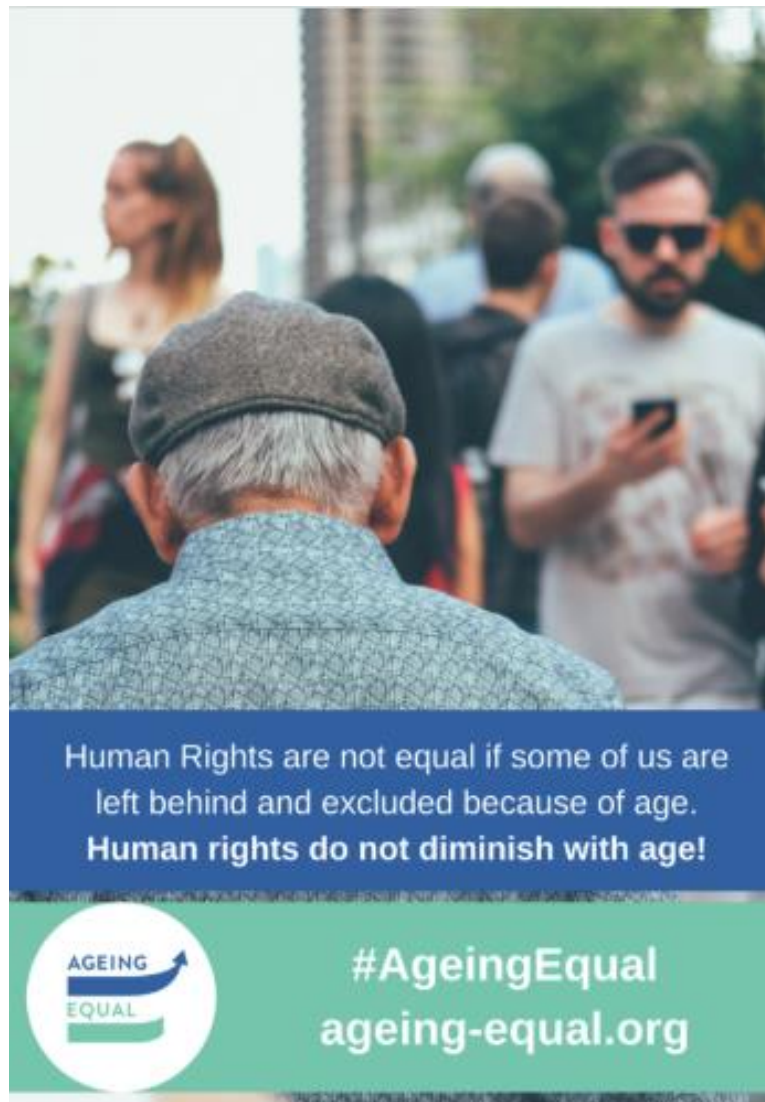


#AgeingEqual campaign

Human rights don't diminish with age

1<sup>st</sup> Oct. – 10<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2018

# #AgeingEqual objectives



1. **Raise awareness of ageism**
2. **Establish a long-lasting community of anti-ageism activists**
3. **Initiate new collaborations for an intersectional approach to ageing**
4. **Infuse other policy dossiers with a human rights perspective**

# Equality principle - UDHR



“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration **without distinction of any kind** such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or **other status**”

# An intersectional approach

**28%** of older women have experienced some kind of violence or abuse in the previous 12 months

**25%** of older Europeans with high care needs suffer maltreatment

Black minority ethnic are diagnosed with dementia **4.5 years** younger than their white counterparts

**Over 30%** older LGBTI report having a mental health problem at some time in their lives

Persisting Gender Pension Gap of **37%** on average in the EU

Roma people will die **10 to 15 years earlier** than most Europeans



# It is about you, about all of us

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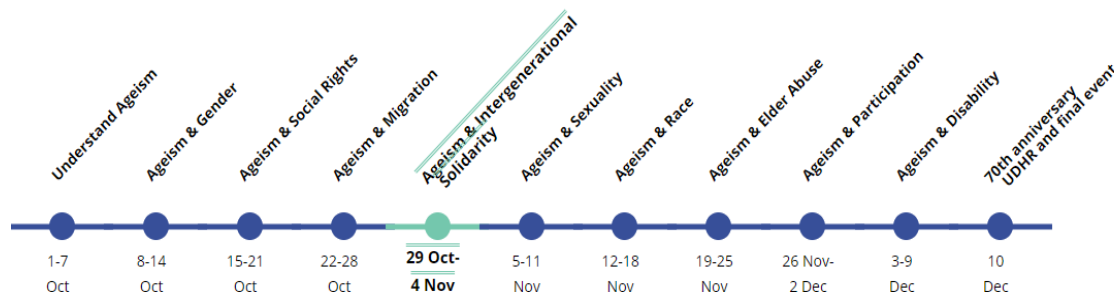
Ageism and sexuality



Learn more and take action on:

[ageing-equal.org](https://ageing-equal.org)

Photo by Rene Bohmer on Unsplash



**EQUALITY FOR OLDER LGBTI**

# EU LEGISLATION – 1

- EU law protects people against discrimination based on sexual orientation – as well as age, disability, religion and belief – in the area of employment (Employment Framework Directive 2000/78)
- However, EU law does not contain an explicit prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of a person's gender identity and gender expression
- Neither does a prohibition on discrimination against trans people appear in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights



# EU LEGISLATION – 2

## **Race and gender (sex) enjoy stronger protection:**

- The 2000/43 Race Equality Directive protects against discrimination based on race and ethnic origin in all areas of life
- Sex discrimination is prohibited by EU law in employment and in access to goods and services (Equal Treatment Directives 2006/54 and 2004/113)
- Trans people are partly covered by these instruments

Source: ILGA-Europe

# PROTECTION IN PRACTICE

You are legally protected across the EU against, for example:

- Being refused a job or fired because of your sexual orientation
- Being harassed by colleagues at work because you are gay or lesbian

## HOWEVER



EU legislation **does not protect** against discrimination based on **sexual orientation, age, disability, religion and belief beyond employment** – which is in access to goods and services, social protection education, health care or housing

# PROTECTION GAPS

Several areas where older LGBT persons are not adequately protected:

- **Housing and LTC services** – residential and institutional care settings fail to respect older LGBT needs and dignity
- **Derived rights for unmarried couples** – social protection (pensions and min income), insurance, property inheritance, child-care responsibility or next of kin
- **Social exclusion** – mental health, risk of loneliness, depression, mal nutrition

# BILATERAL PREJUDICES

- **Many LGBT people remain invisible within seniors' organisations who usually fail to investigate and address their needs**
  - Persisting prejudices and taboos among many older people on the issues of sexuality and sexual orientation
- **Older people have difficulties to be recognised within their own LGBT communities because of their old age**
  - myths that ageing leads to loneliness; ageing erases your libido; ageing is depressing...

# Health care for older LGBTI people

..... *the facts*

SILVER  
RAINBOW

We all get older, and as we do, this often means relying more and more on healthcare services. When you consider the stigma and discrimination older LGBTI people may face, their experience is even more complicated.



1/3



Older LGBT people in Ireland reported having a mental health problem at some time in their lives.

*GLEN (Ireland) 2011*



1/3



Older LGBT people surveyed in Finland said they chose not to use health services for fear of being discriminated against.

*SETA /Jenni Jalava, (Finland) 2012*

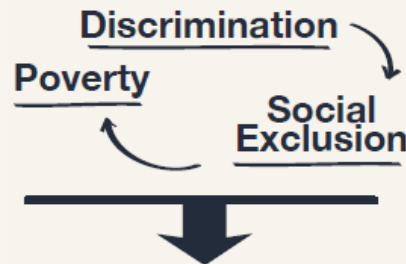


1/5



Older LGB people in the UK don't feel comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation to their doctor.

*Stonewall (UK), 2011*



More difficult for older trans people to access quality health care.

*Testimonies from TGEU and GTSA (Greece), 2015*



Very little research exists on how long-term use of medication will affect older intersex people.

*OII (Australia), 2011*

LET OLDER LGBTI PEOPLE LIVE HEALTHY LIVES

RESPECT **AUTONOMY** RESEARCH **CONFIDENCE**



WWW.ILGA-EUROPE.ORG/SILVERRAINBOW  
#SILVERRAINBOW



# HEALTHCARE and WELLBEING SERVICES

- Older LGBT people often need **more professional care and support** as many may not have children or the traditional support networks
- LGBT people experience **social exclusion while interacting with care providers** and that their life stories and relationships are overlooked and undervalued
- Older LGBT people experience **direct discrimination** within health and social care environments

# SETBACKS

## **In relation to discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation:**

- Lack of political will to enhance the protection against discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation
- Hate speeches and crimes on the rise
- Chilling effect of the far right across the EU

## **In relation to intersectionality age-sexual orientation**

- Lack of activism among older people to stand together for human rights
- Lack of visibility of older LGBTI within older population
- Lack of understanding of the challenges older LGBTI adults face in their lives



## RECOMMENDATIONS – 1

**Both senior organisations and LGBTI organisations should join forces to:**

- **Stand-up for human rights** for all generations
- **Call for comprehensive policy measures** – to deal with the multiple discrimination faced by older LGBTI
- **Spread the word** – improve the knowledge and competencies of future care professionals in the area of LGBTI affirmative practices



## RECOMMENDATIONS – 2

**Argue in favour of a horizontal approach to address multiple discrimination in all relevant policy areas such as:**

- employment
- minimum income/ pensions
- access to goods and services
- health and long-term care,
- living standards and housing
- care giving / family and
- social support and social exclusion





**Say no to ageism!**

**NO SEXISM  
NO RACISM  
NO ABLEISM  
NO AGEISM  
NO HOMOPHOBIA  
NO FATPHOBIA  
NO TRANSPHOBIA  
NO HATEFULNESS**



Learn more and take action on  
[ageing-equal.org](http://ageing-equal.org)

**MERCI!**

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