



AGE Platform Europe Policy Statement

AGE Platform Europe contribution to the 2017 review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)



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Key policy message

AGE Platform regrets the low-profile of the MIPAA within most national policy agendas, its disconnection from other relevant policy frameworks and the overall lack of involvement of older persons, their organisations or other relevant stakeholders in the Plan's implementation. Despite MIPAA's aspiration to actively involve older persons, most national governments have failed to involve older people in its implementation and make of the Plan a genuine bottom-up policy mechanism.

The MIPAA has been a lost opportunity to trigger policy change in the field of ageing and, ultimately, to improve the situation of older people on the ground. It had failed to address the full spectrum of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.

While urging national governments to fulfil their engagements taken under the MIPAA to enhance older people's right to live in dignity and fully participate in society, AGE calls on the EU to closer align its own initiatives to the MIPAA commitments and in turn to strengthen the complementarity between EU and national action and competences.

AGE joins the recommendation of the UN Independent Expert on the rights of older persons calling for a new binding instrument, such as an international convention, to highlight the specific barriers that older people face in respect of their human rights.

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Key Findings

➤ **MIPAA lacks a rights-based approach**

From the beginning the Madrid Plan was not intended to be a human rights instrument. The Plan lacks rights-based vision and consequently human rights are rarely mentioned explicitly in national ageing policies. The MIPAA has only marginally improved awareness about or enhanced visibility of older persons' rights – although it was one of its key aspirations. Instead it consists of a series of recommendations to achieve numerous and rather broad socio-economic objectives i.e. with a major focus on savings in public spending in relation to ageing.

➤ **Without binding effect, MIPAA fails to trigger policy change**

Lacking legal force and dedicated implementation and monitoring mechanisms, national governments and public authorities are not concerned with the MIPAA, and deal instead with the obligations arising from other existing legal and policy frameworks at national and EU level. Therefore, AGE findings converge with those of the UN Independent Expert on the rights of older persons, calling for a new binding instrument, such as an international convention necessary to better protect human rights in old age.

➤ **Disconnection between the MIPAA and other policies or initiatives on ageing**

Even though several countries have adopted some forms of national plans or strategies for action on ageing, little connection is established between these developments and the MIPAA. A similar lack of interaction exists between the Plan and EU actions undertaken in relation to ageing. Governments' engagement in the Plan has neither enhanced, nor further improved EU equality legislation. Final impact of the MIPAA may be more positive in other regions of the world, but within the EU, one can hardly assess to what extent the Plan was used by member states to design, implement and monitor policies on ageing, in particular from the perspective of enjoyment of human rights by all older people.

➤ **Too little progress achieved through MIPAA since 2012**

Over the last years, the overall progress in addressing some challenges of population ageing in EU member states has been noticeable, e.g. by promoting active ageing or improving the image of older people. However, this was achieved to a large extent thanks to a positive spill-over from the European Year 2012 on Active Ageing and Solidarity among Generations, rather than to implementation of the Madrid Plan and its Regional Implementation Strategy.

The MIPAA raised little awareness about the need for a comprehensive and holistic approach to population ageing and consequently triggered too little progress.

➤ **Multiplication of priorities, lack of consistency and follow-up**

The progress is very uneven across all the MIPAA objectives – governments advanced on some of them, whereas completely neglected others – leading to inconsistencies and gaps in the overall Plan’s implementation. MIPAA’s commitments are often imprecise and its objectives not evidence-based. There is a lack of targets and appropriate tools to measure progress and assess trends. One could question whether and to what extent the MIPAA can deliver simultaneously on such a high number of objectives and commitments. However, as long as the Plan remains a cross-cutting policy process, member states must be accountable for all commitments they take in order to achieve progress across all areas.

➤ **Missing synergies between MIPAA overall objectives and specific commitments**

The implementation of the four main goals and ten thematic commitments set in the Vienna Ministerial Declaration in 2012 lacks mutual strengthening. Specific actions targeting one or another commitment are often inconsistent and do not contribute to overall comprehensiveness and efficiency of the Plan. The MIPAA fails to take full advantage of interactions across thematic areas and related policies, while ageing is a typical cross-cutting issue.

➤ **Financial and economic crises put a threat on the achievement of the MIPAA’s objectives**

Since 2008, the continuous austerity measures introduced at national and EU level in response to the financial and the subsequent economic crisis have led to the de-prioritisation of older people’s rights in national policies. This negative impact from the crisis has been also reflected in the MIPAA process since 2012. Evidence from the grass-roots level points out to the worsening of social realities including in old age. Older people face new barriers in respect of their human rights, in particular in access to services such as health and long-term care.

➤ **Low awareness of the MIPAA and limited consultation and engagement of relevant stakeholders**

The MIPAA process has a low-profile in policy agendas at national level. It is not sufficiently known and used by older persons, their organisations, other relevant stakeholders (e.g. equality bodies, researchers, private sector) and policymakers. Despite MIPAA’s aspiration to actively involve older persons in all processes that affect them, most national governments either do not consult them at all or do so marginally and on a case-by-case basis, thus lacking genuine bottom-up mechanisms. They are also making practically no efforts to increase public awareness of the Plan, e.g. access to the MIPAA documents is

difficult as in some countries they are available only in English. Consequently, the process remains unknown and even those who wish to be involved in it are discouraged to do so.

Methodology

The present publication is based on the work done by member organisations of AGE Platform Europe (AGE) who responded to an internal AGE survey on the progress in the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA, Madrid Plan or Plan) at national level. AGE survey was carried out using a questionnaire developed around the four main goals of the UN Economic Commission for Europe's Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Vienna in 2012 and taking account of the ten commitments to foster the implementation of the Plan's Regional Implementation Strategy 2012-2017. Although AGE assessment focuses on the period 2012-2016, some of our findings refer to earlier developments. This is because it is difficult to evaluate progress over such a short period. Member states' implementation reports also refer to the initiatives which date back before the last review in 2012. Therefore, whenever relevant AGE members looked at the impact of the initiatives implemented over a longer period.

AGE received feedback on the MIPAA's implementation from the following countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. AGE has also used findings from discussion in our Task Forces and statutory meetings, (Council and General Assembly). Although they are not presented in the annexed country-by country analysis – drafted only on the basis of the responses received through our internal 2016 consultation on the MIPAA – these additional findings provided us with a broader overview of policy action targeting older people in the EU.

The policy recommendations presented in the present publication take also account of the feedback gathered from AGE member organisations in response to the United Nation's consultation on the MIPAA held in 2015¹. Following the 2015 consultation, the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older people, Rosa Kornfeld-Matte issued in July 2016 an own-initiative report². The report provides a comprehensive analysis of the human rights implications of the implementation of the MIPAA, as well as of its overall role in shaping policies on ageing. AGE publication refers to this report, in particular in the final recommendations.

Whenever possible, AGE's publication is also based on testimonies of older people on the ground. Some AGE members organise regularly meetings with older people to discuss

¹ The full AGE's response to the 2015 consultation is available on http://www.age-platform.eu/images/stories/Publications/papers/AGE_response_MIPAA_Sept2015.pdf

²United Nations, A/HRC/33/44, 8 July 2016

whether and how their needs are addressed by relevant policies. Their aim is not to discuss the specifics of the MIPAA's or other policy process, but rather to bring the authentic voice of older citizens by letting them express opinions on whether and to what extent the complex realities many of them face in daily lives are adequately addressed in policy making. Therefore our publication, in addition to the analysis of the MIPAA as a policy process, provides also older people's assessment of socio-economic realities across the EU. Our participatory approach should be viewed as an additional qualitative way to complement the other more formal methods of monitoring, review and appraisal that national governments and their bodies use in respect to policies on ageing.

Scope and objectives

With this publication, AGE and our member organisations would like to contribute to the mid-term review and assessment of the implementation of the MIPAA in 2017. The publication contains the following three chapters:

1. Synthesis of AGE's assessment of the implementation at national and subnational levels of the four goals set in the Vienna Ministerial Declaration 2012:

- Goal 1: Encourage longer working life and maintain ability to work;
- Goal 2: Participation, non-discrimination and social inclusion of older persons are promoted;
- Goal 3: Dignity, health and independence in older age are promoted and safeguarded; and
- Goal 4: Intergenerational solidarity is maintained and enhanced.

By bringing evidence from national and sub-national levels AGE would like to support all relevant authorities responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring national policy on ageing. The above assessment is completed by the comments and observations on the MIPAA and its impact on older people drafted directly by AGE member organisations (**see Annex**).

2. Synergies with relevant EU policies, laws and instruments

As a European civil society network, we also would like to make links between the Plan and relevant EU and international laws or policies that have an impact on the lives of older people. All levels of policy making, national, European and international should mutually strengthen each other. AGE would like to help national governments assess the MIPAA implementation since 2012 and whenever relevant reformulate its objectives beyond 2017. Our common long-term objective is to overcome the particular challenges older persons face across in Europe and worldwide.

3. Recommendations on how EU and global instruments on ageing can support Member States in implementing their MIPAA RIS commitments and vice versa

Finally, we draw recommendations on how national governments and the EU could better coordinate their respective actions and policy making on ageing, in particular through a mutual coordination between the existing instruments at national, European and international level.

The overall objective of our publication is to contribute to reflection among policy-makers on how best seize the potential of the MIPAA to better protect older people's rights and eventually to enhance their full participation in society. We hope that the following findings will help to indicate areas where further work is needed and to facilitate the discussion during the UNECE ministerial conference on the MIPAA review in September 2017.

I. AGE's assessment of the MIPAA implementation at national and subnational levels

Involvement of stakeholders by national authorities

In line with the commitment 10 – to promote the implementation and follow-up of the regional implementation strategy through regional co-operation – the MIPAA is supposed to provide opportunities for civil society to cooperate in this process. AGE is particularly interested in the development of a bottom-up participatory approach. We call for the involvement of older persons in the development of policies and strategies, as well as in their implementation and assessment of outcomes. For this reason, we encouraged our member organisations to engage with and comment on the implementation of the Madrid Plan and its Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS). The following findings correspond to the last RIS commitment on 'Promoting the implementation of the MIPAA.

The extent to which governments involve stakeholders in the implementation of the Plan varies between countries. Some governments provide only broad information about the MIPAA process, while others organise discussions with stakeholders on aging related issues, but not necessarily directly linked to the Plan. In a few countries, older people's organisations were invited to be part of on-going review process. For example, in Portugal, Malta, Italy, France and Sweden, AGE member organisations or their individual members were requested to provide feedback. In Germany the government is drafting a report on the Plan's implementation which will include contributions from various stakeholders. Some AGE organisations themselves established contact with relevant authorities responsible for the Plan's review and submitted their feedback, e.g. in the Netherlands. Finally, there are countries (Belgium, Greece, Poland and United Kingdom) where public authorities at both national and regional level have little or no knowledge or interest in the MIPAA. Consequently they never mention MIPAA's objectives and pay little attention to the current review process. In the most extreme cases, the relevant documents are available in English only. It is therefore not surprising that the Plan has remained, to a large extent, unknown among national or local stakeholders working on ageing. All in all, the feedback from AGE member organisations shows that no member state has introduced genuine consultation process on the MIPAA.

Policy Findings

AGE member organisations analysed the extent of progress in the implementation of the Plan at national level.

This following section contains a synthesis of AGE members' findings from the country-by-country analysis of the implementation of policies in relation to the MIPAA process and in particular to the four main goals and ten commitments agreed under the Regional Implementation Strategy 2012-2017 for Europe. AGE policy recommendations are presented under each of the MIPAA goals. For more detailed country-by-country assessment, please see the Annex where we present comments and observations on the MIPAA implementation drafted directly by our members.

The assessment takes a wider approach than just looking at the implementation of the initial Plan's objectives and ten commitments set by the Regional Implementation Strategy 2012-2017. It also focuses on the impact of the measures introduced at national and sub-national levels, and indeed, how the lack of action, impacts on the social realities of older people across the EU.

➤ **Goal 1: Encourage longer working life and maintain ability to work**

The consecutive financial, economic and social crises have put further pressure on national governments to reform their social protection systems, emphasizing the need to rethink the place of persons over the age of 50 in the work place. Yet, the reality in the labour market is particularly challenging for older workers, in some countries even dramatically so, with few or no quality job and training opportunities adapted to the growing number of workers over the age of 50.

The feedback from AGE organisations shows that ageism in employment persists and that national authorities fail to eradicate it effectively. For example the data shows that older workers are the least likely to receive in-work training or to take part in life-long learning activities. Older workers are also sometimes used as 'adjustment factor', as they have often been the first ones being laid off in large restructuring cases in the past, despite the low prospects for older workers in the labour market. Another specific form of age discrimination can be seen in cases where older workers who wish to reduce their working time towards the end of their career are encouraged to become self-employed – this late change in the career path often means that workers must move from the social security systems for employees to schemes for self-employed people, thereby often losing out on already acquired rights to social protection, such as pension or health insurance rights.

All this puts older people in a difficult position, where on the one hand side pension entitlements are being reduced and the pressure to extend working career is growing, while on the other hand there are very few job opportunities, and working conditions are rarely adapted to allow older workers to remain active and stay in employment. Consequently, only about one in two persons between 55 and 64 is in employment (average for EU); long-term unemployment is very high in this age group and the gap in employment rates between men and women is highest for them. Eurostat data confirms that transition rates

from unemployment to employment are extremely low for older workers, demonstrating that there are still huge challenges for older workers from the moment they have lost their job.

Even though employers' awareness about the potential of older workers has improved over the last years, efforts – both taken in companies and by public authorities – are dispersed and insufficient to offer genuine opportunities for longer working careers. Some initiatives on labour market policy fail to address the problems of older workers specifically, excluding them from the implementation of many initiatives. Finally, with the growing number of intergenerational families, there is an urgent need for flexible family-work arrangements – otherwise the burden on informal carers (mainly women) will only increase, preventing them from active participation in employment. While some governments have introduced measures to address the above needs, the Madrid Plan has not resulted in comprehensive policy on active ageing in response to the above challenges.

The Madrid Plan has by not succeeded in a more strategic and consistent policy to encourage longer working lives. The challenge is well understood and described in the RIS, but comprehensive action is clearly lacking

AGE recommendations

- Challenge stereotypes and age discrimination in the labour market by applying legislation banning age discrimination and by strengthening the promotion of diversity in the work force; make funding available to promote awareness of the value of older workers among companies and the wider society;
- The creation of specific employment targets for the labour market participation of older workers, and targets for the participation of older workers in life-long learning, supported up by guidelines for job search services that take into account the needs of older workers;
- To protect all workers by sound health and safety rules that include emotional and social risks linked to work, as well as health promotion and by promoting the adaptation of workplaces and the awareness that this is not costly in many cases
- Promote flexible pathways into retirement that allow older workers to reduce their working time without losing out on acquired social protection rights, such as pension or health insurance and create possibilities to combine part-time employment with part-time pensions
- Allow workers with disabilities to retire with a disability pension or an equivalent rather than forcing them to stay in the labour market and use up unemployment benefits

➤ **Goal 2: Participation, non-discrimination and social inclusion of older persons**

Although the Madrid Plan contains references to human rights, including the rights to social protection, non-discrimination and dignity, and adequate living standards, EU member states only partially mainstream the notion of rights in the implementation of specific policies on ageing. With its focus on socio-economic objectives, the Madrid Plan is not a human rights instrument and it does not empower older people to claim their rights. For example, although it recognises older people as contributors to society, it does not include specific actions to tackle age discrimination in all areas of life.

Whereas laws, policies and practices that reproduce ageist prejudices still exist in the EU, the MIPAA did not draw enough attention to these persisting forms of structural ageism which deprioritise, disregard or even exclude older people. For example, across the EU older people are denied access to disability benefits, personal assistance and other forms of support due to age limits. Negative images of ageing and older people have been even further exacerbated in the context of continued austerity. Due to fiscal consolidation, older people are represented as a 'burden' in debates, economic projections, reports, policy frameworks and the media. Such stereotypes overlook older people's numerous contributions to society and advance measures that make economic sense while largely ignoring whether they adequately meet the needs of the older population in a dignified manner. This is especially the case regarding shrinking care packages, support to informal caregivers, old age income and access to healthcare

Regarding old-age social exclusion, the implementation of the MIPAA ignored the evidence of human rights' violation occurring among most vulnerable groups of older people, e.g. single women or oldest old in the aftermath of the financial and economic crisis. In this context, AGE would like to recall that although the EU surveys reveal that older people – as a whole 65+ population – have been relatively better protected against the effects of the crisis in comparison with the rest of the population, the risk of poverty and social exclusion remains high for specific age-sub groups of older people, such as single older seniors, mainly women, the very old or those living on minimum pension income or social assistance.

In addition, further budgetary cuts in the provision of social services have a considerable impact on older people's financial capacity to access and afford vital services, such as preventive health or long-term care. The on-going erosion of pension income, in particular among the oldest old (most often women) prevents older people from affording health and long-term care. Moreover, the gender pension gap, already at a high level before the pension reforms, is now almost 40 % and will probably increase due to the tightened link between contributions and benefits, as long as women are still fulfilling the care services that the state does not provide. It is also important to consider other forms of

discrimination that could add to an individual's experience of structural ageism, such as socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation and race. Ageist attitudes can build upon these complex intersections, leading to many older people experiencing multiple discriminations.

Too little funding is available on training for older people. This reflects the lack of investment in lifelong learning in recent years, in particular since the financial crises in 2008. Digital illiteracy is still common among many older people. This results in increasing inequalities and barriers to participation and prevents older people from using new technologies not only at work but also in home environments as a support to independent ageing e.g. e-health. However, the current development in the internet of things (IoT) may partially help overcome this challenge.

Some measures are proposed to facilitate cultural, social and civic participation in old age, such as reduced prices of tickets to cultural events or free local transport. The latter one provides a crucial and concrete support to participation of older people which should be maintained even in this time of cuts in public spending.

Overall, the MIPAA process has not substantially triggered equality and social policies in response to the changing social realities of these specific sub groups among older population. A number of issues received too little, if any, attention through the implementation of the Plan, namely:

- Structural ageism and the need to address the intersections between age and other grounds of discrimination;
- Persisting high poverty rates among older women and the oldest old due to income erosion;
- Impact on income adequacy of moving from state pension to 2nd and 3rd pillar schemes;
- Non-take-up of social rights among older people eligible for social benefits, in particular those in vulnerable situations often due to the complexity of social protection systems, a lack of information and support, and social stigma.
- Increased use of means testing in access to social benefits, eroding universal access to basic human rights;
- Accessibility and affordability of health and long-term care for the most vulnerable.

AGE recommendations

- Mainstream a rights-based approach to ageing in all legislative proposals and impact assessment mechanisms;
- Collect data for all age groups, without age limits and with additional age bands: without such data it is difficult to evaluate the impact on older people and to eliminate unlawful age discrimination and promote age equality.

- Whenever provided through pensions or other minimum income schemes, the old-age income must remain adequate – in order to fulfil older people’s needs in terms of what they consider being essential to preserve decent standards of living and personal dignity
- Guarantee individual and adequate pension rights for all to ensure a dignified life in old age – including those with justified career breaks, mainly women
- Safeguard or restore the equity function of social security pensions in pension reforms; strengthen gender equality by recommending to create care credits in pension schemes, at the same time as developing quality long-term care services and facilitating work-life balance for carers
- Guarantee an adequate minimum income in old age to fight poverty and prevent social exclusion – the right to minimum income schemes, including minimum pension, should be recognised as a fundamental right to ensure everyone’s dignity and independence; they should be based on reference budgets
- Narrow the gap between take-up and entitlement to social benefits among older people; this should increase overall efficiency of social inclusion policies and positively contribute to the achievement of Europe 2020 objective on the reduction of poverty risk
- Address age discrimination faced by older people in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the EU Disability Strategy
- Combat ageism through awareness-raising campaigns, including – but not limited – to contributing to the WHO campaign against ageism
- Extend legislation to cover age discrimination beyond the field of employment, in particular by adopting the draft EU horizontal equal treatment directive
- Maintain mobility of older people as an integral element of social inclusion policy aiming at enhancing participation and social cohesion along the whole life span
- Provide infrastructure and financial resources to involve older people in policy-making on a permanent basis and at all stages, from the design, through monitoring, evaluation and control to reformulation
- Pay equal attention to all type of older people’s organisations to participate in policy-making i.e. regardless of their experience or knowledge about policy work so that every voice in civil society is heard.

➤ **Goal 3: Dignity, health and independence in older age**

EU national and local governments, while struggling to restore balance in their public finances and boost their economies, often overlook the impact that austerity measures have on older people. By restricting universal access to quality and affordable social protection, governments put at risk older people's rights to age independently, healthy and with dignity. Austerity measures also hinder social cohesion within countries and across the European Union.

Older people and their families struggle more and more to find care services which provide dignity and independence and are affordable for them. The out-of-pocket costs for long-term care exceed the disposable income of the vast majority of pensioners, not only those on minimum pension schemes. Quality of long-term care is a serious challenge as well, as many care professionals are poorly trained, overloaded with work and structures for the prevention of abuses are not in place. This is contradictory to various binding provisions of international law, including the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 8), the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 19) and the Revised European Social Charter, enshrining the right of older persons to social protection (Article 23).

AGE members point to the insufficient health and care infrastructure and its uneven geographical deployment. Access to them varies enormously among cities and country side, or among central and periphery regions. Last but not least, the access to long-term care is becoming even more conditioned by individual financial resources, which increases inequalities; this is particularly the case in countries where availability of public long-term care is limited.

Moreover, in many member states informal carers are forced to provide care services to their older relatives because there are no long-term care services available – 70% of care work is informal. There is also a growing trend for long-term care providers to target only light to medium needs and reject older people with very severe support needs, such as persons with fronto-temporal dementia, because they are considered to be too heavy a burden for the limited staff. The duty of care for these heavy cases falls back on the shoulders of families who are neither trained nor supported to provide 24h/365d long-term care for their relative with high support needs. For many, quality support services are not present, as highlighted by European Parliament very recently.³ In another recent study Eurofound highlighted that 22% of women and 18% of men care for family members.⁴

³ European Parliament, [Resolution of 13 September 2016 on creating labour market conditions favourable for work-life balance](#), 2016/2017(INI)

⁴ Eurofound, [Working and caring: Reconciliation measures in times of demographic change](#), 2015.

Looking at initiatives and actions at national and local level, AGE members recognise multiple efforts made to raise public awareness about elder abuse. In several member states, national strategies to prevent elder abuse were adopted. The remaining challenge is however to apply these principles on the ground. Further development of community care, palliative services and specialised units is another positive aspect of the last years. These developments take place as the needs for care of an ageing population are constantly increasing and public authorities have finally become conscious about the scale of the challenge. In all those respects, the Madrid Plan does not provided a coordinated and far-looking strategy.

AGE recommendations

- The recognition of the value of informal caregiving through acknowledgement of carers' rights i.e. take better account of the gender dimension in labour market policies and develop more flexible care leave provisions to accommodate the needs of those workers - in particular older women – who care for older people in need of care.
- Develop EU 'carer's leave' including the care of relatives such as children, young, dependent relatives and elderly parents and protect the social rights of informal carers, including pension rights.
- Promote right to dignity, physical and mental well-being, freedom and security – quality standards for health and long-term care services should be introduced and adhered to by public authorities e.g. European Voluntary Charter of the rights and responsibilities of older people in need of long-term care and assistance.
- Reach out, inform and help those older people in particularly vulnerable situations who are unable to claim their rights – in particular the very old, disabled and/or isolated older people, older migrants and people from ethnic minorities and empower them to participate actively in their communities and in wider society.

➤ **Goal 4: Enhance and maintain intergenerational solidarity**

Intergenerational solidarity has been getting further public awareness and policy attention since 2012, the European Year which focused on the issue of active ageing and various forms of cooperation between young and older people. The MIPAA/RIS 2012-2017 coincided with this positive development and several governments sought to further build on the momentum of the EY 2012. However, there might be also a more practical reason for the enhanced interest in intergeneration solidarity, namely the economic considerations.

For example, in the EU countries which were more severely hit by the economic and social crisis, family transfers between young and older people are simply indispensable. For instance, AGE organisations report a new trend of the ‘return’ of older people to live together with their children and grandchildren. This is either due to the fact that older people cannot any longer pay for their own housing; because their families need older relatives at home to provide them informal care; or because intergenerational ties help to deal mutually with financial problems.

One may consider solidarity between generations established in time of the crisis as positive. Some countries would have collapsed without such mutual support. However, solidarity within and between generations is in principle based on voluntary basis and, therefore, must not be imposed. Otherwise, the crisis will endanger the social progress achieved over the last decades. Forced intergenerational solidarity may entail other risks for older people, risks such as abuse. Despite increased solidarity within families, one sees more and more ageism and polarisation of generations at societal level, as often stated in popular press and media i.e. older people are perceived either as a burden or wealthy and privileged for instance.

Regarding targeted actions to promote multigenerational dialogue or intergenerational learning at national level, little progress has been reported by AGE members. Very few educational campaigns look at the issue of intergenerational solidarity or that of population and individual ageing. Moreover, in the context of the growing challenge to welcome refugees in the EU from all age groups, the concept of intergenerational solidarity takes a new dimension and may positively contribute to promote dialogue in a border sense between people of different cultures, religions, socio-economic background and finally ages. Examples include pilot initiatives engaging older people to help refugees and their children were implemented in Germany.

All in all, there is no evidence to demonstrate any role of the MIPAA’s as a driving force in maintaining and enhancing intergenerational solidarity, while any existing national policies on solidarity among generations lack a comprehensive vision. It is a missed opportunity considering the cross-cutting characteristic of solidarity among generations. It can and should be applied to the whole spectrum of areas impacting older people’s lives, such as income, employment, care, participation etc. AGE would like to remind and reiterate some of the key policy recommendations formulated during the European year 2012 which are relevance to the MIPAA review

AGE recommendations

- Launch intergenerational solidarity campaigns at national level to highlight the important societal value of older people and activate their potential in society by challenging pervasive negative stereotypes;
- Preserve any older worker's valuable labour market skills and experience through initiatives that promote the transfer of skills between generations, for instance, through mentoring schemes which allow for the sharing of skills and know-how between the generations; Address at the same the situation of older people who do not have valuable labour market skills e.g. those with low skills or whose skills are no longer of relevance;
- Promote actions which enable older people to be more involved in a wide range of volunteering activities, including intergenerational activities and volunteering in the care sector where older people can provide useful support to their peers in synergy with professional carers; the role of older people in enhancing social cohesion in communities including migrant and refugees should be also considered;
- Consider intergenerational links as part of policies aiming at fair, inclusive and financially sustainable strategies encompassing the needs, capacities and expectations of current and future generations.

II. Synergies between the MIPAA and relevant EU and international policies, laws and instruments

Over the last decade a number of policies, strategies, plans or frameworks have been put in place in relation to ageing. Some of them target exclusively national and subnational levels, while others focus on the EU. However, the feedback from AGE member organisations points out that this multiplication of policies and instruments on ageing lacks overall coherence and coordination.

In this section we would like to present possible connections between the engagement taken in the framework of the MIPAA and the key European and global policy process in relation to population ageing. The upcoming MIPAA's ministerial conference in September 2017 – which will update and reformulate the Plan's objectives – should simultaneously provide a unique opportunity to set these priorities in conjunction with all other relevant policy processes. A better coordination among them should strengthen their individual efficiency and trigger coherent and forward-looking policy making on ageing. This should be done in particular by connecting all responsible authorities, bodies and stakeholders at all levels to facilitate strategic thinking and decision making.

2.1. EU instruments, policy processes and initiatives

The European Union has, so far, not been proactive enough in disseminating information around the Madrid Plan. The European Commission only sporadically refers to the process in its internal and external actions, mainly when consolidating the existing policy framework on ageing. Since there is a need for raising in-depth awareness about the MIPAA process across all levels, the EU could have a unique role in using its coordination role to enhance such broader and cross-cutting policy making on ageing and the human rights of older people.

The following key EU instruments and policy processes in relation to human rights and socio-economic policies are all relevant in the context of the implementation of the MIPAA. National governments should use these processes in conjunction with their action at national level to fulfil engagements and achieve objectives set in the framework of the Madrid Plan.

EU legal provisions in relation to human rights

The European Union is bound by its founding treaties and respect for human rights counts among the Union's fundamental values. The Treaty of Lisbon (2009) introduced a new focus on human rights enshrining the binding force of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The EU Charter lists the civil, political, social and economic rights recognized in the European

Union. The EU established the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) as a consultative body for EU institutions and appointed a Special Representative for Human rights (EUSR) whose role is to enhance the effectiveness and visibility of EU human rights policy outside its borders. The human rights of European citizens are protected by specific laws and policies of the European Union, such as equality directives, strategies and guidelines.

The EU should apply its legal provisions and monitor their impact on respect for the rights of older people. All EU action should be coherent, with its mandate under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, to protect older people's rights as for other age groups. Moreover, EU socio-economic initiatives and policies should be rights-based in order to empower everyone, including older people, to contribute, prosper and enjoy their economic, social, cultural and civic rights as equal citizens.

Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Semester

The Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth refers directly to older people (although not in terms of their rights), in particular through policies promoting active and healthy ageing. So far, the strategy's implementation focused mainly on enhancing people's health conditions and autonomy in order to prolong their contribution to economic growth with their skills and experience. Such a purely economic approach did not adequately address the consequences that the on-going reforms of social protection systems – particularly changes in pension schemes and the reorganisation of health and long-term care – have on the social realities of older people. The MIPAA process followed a similar economic-centred approach, focusing more on financial rather than social and human rights aspects of ageing. Both policy frameworks covering very similar priorities should therefore become mutually correlated via common objectives, including those in the field of human rights.

Future EU Pillar of Social Rights

This new initiative of the European Commission is the very first attempt to focus on social rights in a comprehensive way. In the initial outline of the pillar the Commission highlights the right to access quality, affordable long-term care services, including home-based care and provided by adequately qualified professionals. It also highlights that the financing of long-term care services shall be strengthened and improved to access adequate care in a financially sustainable way. AGE highly welcomes these provisions, which set out standards for a domain in which the European Union is not active yet, although action is badly needed given the rapid development of the long-term care sector, including profit-making providers, across the EU.

Awaiting the final proposal of the EU pillar of social rights, AGE urges the Commission to reflect on , in its final proposal for the pillar, the recommendations from civil society, in particular to look at social rights from a broader human-rights rather than restricted labour-

market perspective. This is indispensable to effectively improve the social realities on the ground for people of all ages.⁵

EU Covenant on Demographic Change

Launched in December 2015, the Covenant on Demographic Change⁶ is a major policy outcome of AGE's 2012 Campaign "Towards an Age-Friendly EU by 2020" with the goal of shaping a fair and sustainable society to all ages. Gathering European public authorities, at local, regional and national level, and other relevant stakeholders, the Covenant commits to develop environments that support active and healthy ageing, enhance independent living and well-being of older persons, and create a society for all ages. The Covenant is particularly meant to help local and regional authorities to respond to Europe's demographic challenge by promoting the WHO holistic approach to population ageing (the "Age-Friendly Environments" model).

The Covenant remains closely linked to the EU political agenda through the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Health Ageing (EIP AHA). Consequently, the Covenant provides an additional tool for a coordination of policy-making on ageing at EU level. It should be taken into account in the implementation of the MIPAA process so that any further reflection and initiatives in relation to the rights of older people can be developed in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders across all levels. In addition to its direct link to the EIP AHA, the Covenant can facilitate the MIPAA's implementation by connecting it to other major policy processes, such as the World Health Organisation Global Network on Age-Friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC) and its affiliated programmes, the WHO-European Healthy Cities Network, the Dublin Declaration on age-friendly cities and communities in Europe.

Voluntary Charters

In the field of age discrimination in the labour market, the European Commission encourages employers to promote diversity management in the work place. To do so voluntary charters have been developed at national level – aimed at encouraging companies to implement and develop diversity policies. Consisting of a short document voluntarily signed by a company or a public institution, they outline the measures to be undertaken to promote diversity and equal opportunities in the workplace, regardless of race or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability and religion. These diversity charters provide a complementary tool to fight discrimination in the workplace and to promote equality across all age and population groups. National governments should further promote them, when implementing equality policies in employment, accordingly to the MIPAA's goal on Encourage longer working life and maintain ability to work

⁵ See AGE position to the consultation on EU position on social rights

⁶ <http://www.afeinnovnet.eu/event/launch-covenant-demographic-change>

There are also examples of voluntary charters in other areas. On the initiative of older people and their organisations and inspired by national standards in relation to long-term care, the European Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Older People in Need of Long-Term Care and Assistance was developed in 2010 by AGE and a group of 10 national member organisations with the support of the EU DAPHNE programme.⁷ Later on, building on this Charter, a European Quality Framework for Long-Term Care was developed by national coordination of public authorities, NGOs, service providers and researchers.⁸ Although not directly linked to the MIPAA, these voluntary initiatives have been successful in raising awareness of the existing gaps and are widely used as reference documents by NGOs, professionals and policymakers across the EU, at the Council or Europe and in the UN Open Ended Working Group on Aging. Therefore they should be eventually used by national authorities as benchmarks in the implementation and design of ageing policies at national and sub-national levels.

EU research projects

Abundant research projects funded by the EU provide an additional, yet largely underused source of good practice and innovation which is of direct interest for policy-makers. Research outcomes may and should inform the MIPAA by providing concrete examples, proposals and conclusions in relation to initiatives taken by national governments. One illustration, are the findings from an EU research proposing a different perspective of ageing⁹ which could inform governments' policies in relation to various commitments and specific policy measures taken under the MIPAA RIS for Europe:

Chronological age is the measure of how many years a person has already lived. [...] Discussing population ageing only in terms of chronological age can be misleading and result in poorly-designed policies.

Strategies of saving and investments are clearly forward-looking behaviours. Understanding them requires that we know not only how old people are, but how many years they expect to live as well [...] Requests for and the provision of certain medical procedures also depend on the number of remaining years of life. One example of this is the knee replacement surgery, which is often performed on people above the age of seventy. It would not make much sense to do this if the operation did not significantly increase a person's number of years of mobility. [...] Medical expenses are especially high in the last years of life. In forecasting these expenditures, it is important to take into consideration that, with increasing life expectancies those last years of life happen at an ever older age. Forecasting medical expenditures only on the basis of chronological age produces figures that are too high and

⁷ <http://www.age-platform.eu/age-projects/health-and-long-term-care/659-daphne>

⁸ <http://www.wedo-partnership.eu>

⁹ Source: Sanderson, Scherbov: A new perspective on population ageing, European Demographic Research Papers

could lead to erroneous policy decisions. The same is true with respect to forecasts for specific health-related items, such as the need for nursing home beds. Thus, supplementing the concept of age with the concept of prospective age allows us to analyse ageing more deeply than if we were to use only one age measure.

The fundamental feature of prospective age is that it is a time-horizon consistent measure, because all people with the same prospective age have the same expected number of years ahead of them, regardless of the number of years that they have already lived.

2.2. International-level instruments, policy processes and initiatives

Older people's rights are gaining momentum at international level with the on-going debate on how to improve their protection on the ground, in particular thanks to the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), the Recommendation of the Council of Europe on the promotion of human rights of older persons; the work of the UN Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older Persons and the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing.

In a recent analysis of the application of the MIPAA, the Independent Expert noted that while the Plan had been instrumental in the development of national strategies and policies on ageing in a number of countries, it had failed to address the full spectrum of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. Hence AGE supports the Expert's call for a new binding instrument, an international convention, to highlight the specific barriers that older people face in respect of their human rights. However, we are conscious that such a convention cannot have a real impact unless accompanied by targeted actions at regional, national and local levels. The process of MIPAA review can feed into that debate in terms of identifying the gaps and providing 'evidence' about the best way that these can be reflected in an international legal instrument.

On the positive side the Independent Expert also reported that the MIPAA had fostered the participation of older persons in the design of action plans and policies at national level. The feedback from AGE member organisations does not confirm this latter finding. On the contrary, it is despite MIPAA's aspiration to actively involve older persons in all processes that affect them, national governments either do not consult them at all or do so marginally and on a case-by-case basis, thus lacking genuine bottom-up mechanisms.

AGE welcomes and supports above developments at international level, and urges the European Union to build on this positive work-in-progress and to develop their own mechanisms to promote and protect older people's rights. In the meantime, the MIPAA should be better used to monitor the real impact of the existing framework on lives of older people. National governments and the EU should also seek to build synergies with the following global instruments.

- **UN Convention of the Rights for People with Disabilities**

To protect and promote the equal rights of approximately 80 million people in the EU living with disabilities, the EU (and therefore member states) ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2010. Yet older people with functional limitations are rarely recognised, consulted and supported as people with disabilities, and consequently they often – practically – fall out of the scope of this UN Convention.

The EU also takes no action to address the intersection of inequalities based on age and disability, since they have not paid attention to persisting age limits in disability provisions across the EU and other specific disadvantages faced by older people with disabilities. This contradicts the CRPD, the EU Disability Strategy and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and leads to huge discrepancies among laws and policies that target older people with support needs/limitations in their daily activities and younger people with disabilities.

The current review of the MIPAA should be the opportunity for national governments to link closer their commitments under goals 2 and 3 of the RIS to the provisions of the CRPD. 27 out of 28 Member States have ratified and are bound by the CRPD (with Ireland probably ratifying as well in the near future). Hence, the disability convention is a common obligation for the EU and its Member States, which should make sure that it is applied without discrimination against older persons with disabilities. This can be done through monitoring, data gathering and analysis, and awareness raising of the relevance of the CRPD for this age group. The EU and national governments should abolish age barriers, including in data collection exercises. The EU should furthermore provide guidelines to Member States on how the Convention should apply equally to all regardless of age and include a disability rights perspective in its ageing policies.

- **WHO programmes and strategies for Europe**

The WHO strategy and action plan for healthy ageing in Europe 2012–2016 was developed as part of the cooperation between the European Commission and the WHO Regional Office for Europe. The Pilot European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing, based on the concept of age-friendly communities, is a concrete example of the exchange of information and mutual learning between both institutions. The WHO Regional Office for Europe action is therefore complementary to the European Commission's initiatives on active ageing, namely its work on age-related research and innovation, the labour market, as well as the broader social policy aspects. The WHO role is focused on public health over the life-course.¹⁰ The above example of task sharing and mutual cooperation is relevant to the future implementation of the MIPAA and its regional plan for Europe. Links could also be built in the frame of the WHO's campaign against ageism.

¹⁰ Strategy and action plan for healthy ageing in Europe 2012–2016, WHO Regional Office for Europe, EHPF3/9 120348

To better visualise interaction among the above policy processes, the following table highlights synergies between the MIPAA RIS 2012-2017 ten thematic commitments and key policy processes at EU and global level, showing necessary interaction member states should ensure for the further implementation of the Plan beyond 2017.

<p style="text-align: center;">MIPAA RIS 2012-2017 Commitments</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Corresponding EU instruments and initiatives</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Corresponding International instruments and initiatives</p>
<p>1. Mainstreaming ageing in all policies: a society for all ages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (article 25) • EC, EP and Council annual reports on the implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights • EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy • Fundamental Rights Agency (projects and annual report) • Draft EU equal treatment directive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN legal instrument on the rights of older persons • UN Independent Expert on the rights of older persons • Council of Europe’s Recommendation on the promotion of the human rights of older persons
<p>2. Ensuring full integration and participation of older persons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing to promote age-friendly environments as a response to demographic change • European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities to ensure that smart city initiatives are inclusive for all citizens, regardless of their age and abilities, and aligned 	

	<p>with the upcoming EU Urban Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Access City Award, to ensure that this EU initiative takes on board the accessibility specific needs of older persons and supports their full participation in society 	
<p>3. Promoting equitable and sustainable economic growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Semester incl. Country Specific Recommendations which deal with social protection reforms to ensure progress is achieved toward the headline targets of Europe 2020 strategy • EU Silver Economy strategy to ensure that it will target all older people regardless of their gender, age, digital literacy and income • EC Communication on “Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination: – a new political framework for tourism in Europe”, which seeks to boost tourism in low/medium season by providing adequate offers to senior tourists 	
<p>4. Adjusting social protection to demographic change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Commission initiative to set up a ‘pillar of social rights’, as announced in the Commission Work Programme 2016, to ensure it does not leave out older persons when adapting social policy legislation to new work environments and developing European benchmarks on flexicurity • New EU legislation in the field of financial services that may affect older consumers, such as the recast Directive on institutions for occupational retirement provision (IORP) and the new EU Directive (2014/50/EU) on minimum requirements for enhancing workers’ mobility • Upcoming review of the European Platform Against Poverty 	

	<p>(EPAP): contributing to EU debate on the new format of the convention against poverty and social exclusion, with focus on the impact from the crisis on vulnerable older people; influence work of the upcoming Dutch presidency on policies to fight poverty</p>	
<p>5. Enabling labour markets to respond to demographic change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of the EU Directive on equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions, at national and workplace level to assess to what extent it protects older workers from age discrimination in the labour market and fosters age diversity in the workplace • The 2015 EC proposal for a Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market, the Labour Mobility Package and the follow-up of the EU Occupational Health and Safety Legislation, announced in the Commission Work Programme 2016 to ensure that older workers' needs will be adequately addressed • The implementation of Directive 2014/95/EU which requires companies with more than 500 employees to publish information relating to their diversity policy to assess to what extent large companies are aware of their new obligations and have included adequate provisions with regard to age diversity in their Human Resources management practices • The EU social partners Framework agreement on active ageing, included in their triennial work plan 2015-2017. 	

<p>6. Promoting life-long learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The upcoming EU New Skills Agenda, to ensure older person’s needs for access to life-long learning and right to education are promoted incl. the skills guarantee 	
<p>7. Ensuring quality of life and maintain independent living</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EU Directive on Victim Support (2012/29/EU), to improve its relevance to combat elder abuse. • The upcoming EU Accessibility Act to ensure that the final text will promote accessibility for all and will pay equal attention to the accessibility needs of ageing persons experiencing limitations in their daily activities, • The draft Directive on the accessibility of public sector bodies' websites to ensure that the proposed directive will be adopted soon and transposed rapidly to improve the accessibility of public websites for disabled and older users • The Digital Single Market Strategy, to ensure that accessibility requirements as well as digital skills are included to guarantee its inclusiveness to older persons • The EU Rolling Plan for ICT Standardisation to provide AGE members/experts’ views on the needs for preliminary or complementary ICT standardisation activities to be undertaken in support of EU access-for-all objectives • The upcoming EU Urban Agenda, to ensure that it will support age-friendly environments where older people are empowered to live active and autonomous lives thanks to inclusive accessibility and safety design of transport, outdoor spaces and built environment, quality services and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities • The WHO Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health (which will include among its priorities a focus on combating ageism) and proposed Decade on Healthy Ageing that is currently being developed by WHO, to build synergies between these key instruments and relevant EU processes.

	<p>opportunities for social/civic participation for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of the EC Communication on “Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe”, which seeks to boost tourism in low/medium season by providing adequate offers to senior tourists. 	
8. Mainstreaming a gender approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of EU Directives on Gender Equality and EU initiatives that seek to promote gender equality and combat violence against women (such as the DAPHNE strand of the REC Programme), to ensure that they take on board the need of older women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Sustainably Development Goals (SDG) – Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
9. Promoting intergenerational and intra-generational solidarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The envisaged new Directive on carers’ leave, to ensure that it will tackle gender inequality in its broadest sense and will cover not only the needs of parents with young children but also the needs of older workers (mainly older women) with informal caring duties toward older dependent relatives, to help boost employment rate of older women and combat gender inequalities in old age • Relevant actions undertaken as the follow-up to the EY2012 	
10. Promoting the implementation of the MIPAA-RIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The joint work done by the EC and UN-ECE on the Active Ageing Index to encourage Member States and subnational authorities to use the AAI as a monitoring tool for progress achieved through the MIPAA RIS. 	

III. Recommendations on how EU and global instruments on ageing can support Member States in implementing their MIPAA RIS commitments and vice versa

Respect and enjoyment of human rights by everyone is a fundamental feature of our democratic societies. It has become even truer in this time of complex institutional, social and economic contexts in the EU and at global level when fundamental rights tend to be overshadowed by economic concerns. Achieving an inclusive society for all ages and population groups requires adopting comprehensive, coordinated and progressive policies to address all aspects of population ageing, building on relevant existing initiatives, including the current review of the Madrid Plan.

While the MIPAA is not a human rights instrument it has the potential to address various challenges older people face from their socio-economic activities to cultural and civic participation. While regretting the low-profile of the Plan within national policy agendas, its disconnection from other relevant policy frameworks and the overall lack of involvement of older persons, their organisations or other relevant stakeholders in the MIPAA process, AGE submits the following series of recommendations to be taken into consideration in the conclusions of the current review of the MIPAA process.

AGE recommendations on MIPAA's policy content

- Assess any current and future reforms in relation to ageing from a broader, human rights perspective, i.e. how policy measures can help fight ageism and ensure that older persons can live in dignity and participate equally in society;
- Recognise and address the particular challenges older people across the EU face with regard to: adequate income to live in dignity; social networks to fight loneliness and stimulate social participation; accessible, affordable and quality health and long-term care; and access to goods and services regardless of age criterion;
- Follow the recommendation of the UN Independent Expert on the rights of older persons calling for a new binding instrument, such as an international convention, to highlight the specific barriers that older people face in respect of their human rights;
- Continue discussing how the already existing UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities applies to older people and ensure an equal application of its provisions to everyone, without distinction on the basis of old age;

- Follow the recent call from the UNECE for active strategies to meet older migrants' economic, social and healthcare needs – in order to address the increasing international mobility and migration of people at an older age;
- Apply a rights-based approach in the implementation of all domains covered by the MIPAA in view of promoting and protecting the rights of older persons in all national plans, policies and laws.

AGE recommendations on MIPAA's implementation mechanism

- Increase awareness about the Plan and involve external actors, in particular older persons, in its implementation, monitoring and eventual reformulation of the objectives;
- Use an evidence-based approach to policy-making on ageing and develop common indicators in the context of MIPAA objectives. Greater emphasis should be given to social indicators and not only to economic ones. This approach should be promoted both at national and EU level to reflect a comprehensive and exhaustive definition and understanding of the notion of quality of life across the life course.
- Mainstream in the implementation of the MIPAA the quantitative targets and indicators on social protection set by other policy frameworks, e.g. the Europe 2020 Strategy headline targets, the Active Ageing Index developed by the European Commission and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), or what will follow as proposals from the consultation on the EU Pillar of Social Rights;
- Promote the MIPAA to make it visible, transparent and connected to all relevant governmental actions and initiatives which impact Europe's ageing population and the lives of older persons. This will increase ownership of the process among the relevant actors and facilitate its implementation at all levels;
- Introduce monitoring and accountability mechanisms in order to evaluate progress achieved across all MIPAA objectives and its Regional Implementation Strategy. Having made progress in some areas, the Plan's implementation has been very fragmented and uneven and did not help to achieve tangible results across all its objectives;
- Remove barriers to the participation of older people and their organisations in the monitoring and implementation of the Plan (via more transparency and genuine consultation mechanism) in view of using its full potential to build consensus among all stakeholders on how to create an inclusive society for all ages. This will eventually ensure that persons are able to age with security and dignity and continue to participate in society as citizens with full rights.

AGE recommendations on synergies among policy process

- The EU should closer align its own initiatives to the MIPAA commitments and in turn strengthen the complementarity between EU and national action and competences.
- The EU could encourage member states to link their European engagements in the field of employment and social policies to the implementation of the commitments they make under the Madrid Plan.
- The EU should apply its existing legal framework and monitor its impact on the rights of older people. Its action should be coherent in its mandate under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights to protect older people's rights as for other age groups.
- All EU socio-economic initiatives and policies should be rights-based in order to empower everyone, including older people, to contribute, prosper and enjoy their economic, social, cultural and civic rights as equal citizens.
- The EU should make more reference to international rights instruments that already exist to build a comprehensive framework for the respect, protection and promotion of social rights. Real political commitment and visibility are needed for this new initiative to avoid mistakes of the past, such as the lack of progress on Europe 2020 Strategy's targets.

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