



Introductory Statement in the frame of 7th session of OEWG

Thank you Chair

AGE Platform Europe, the largest European network of self-advocacy organisations of older people, recently adopted a Manifesto on the human rights of older people. This is the first consensual position that was built with the direct involvement of more than 100 representative organisations of older people, using genuine bottom-up participatory methodology. In this document, older people across the European Union call - in their own words – for a new UN Convention on the rights of older persons.

Older people in the EU stress that although in principle human rights are universal, they are not equally applied across the lifecourse. According to European data the prevalence of ageism increases while that of racism and sexism decreases¹. Age discrimination is the only form of inequality that is widely accepted as normal, legitimate and justifiable, and age categorisations are largely seen as useful or even necessary. These include age limits for volunteering or job retraining, which persist while at the same time the EU aims to extend working lives and promote active ageing! Ongoing policy reforms only provide incremental progress but fail to ensure that the rights everyone has do not diminish nor become less important with age.

This is why older people in the EU conclude that the equal application of existing laws and policies addressing the general population is not sufficient. Mme Chair, some decades ago distinctions on the basis of one's sex were also considered as 'objectively justified'. A new UN Convention is necessary so that the discrimination and exclusion of older people ceases to be seen as normal and more acceptable than discrimination and exclusion of other population groups, such as women and people with disabilities.

¹ Based on the outcomes of the European Social Survey. See also Liat Ayalon, Perceived Age, Gender and Racial/Ethnic Discrimination in Europe: Results from the European Social Survey (2013)

