



Group exercise on economic and social rights of older persons – case study

You are working for an Older Persons' Organisation in Phantasia, which is going to be reviewed by the UN Committee on Economic and Social Rights in October 2021.

- *What are the occasions when you will be able to provide information to the UN Committee?*
- *Based on the information below, which issues would you raise with the Committee? Please indicate the right(s) in the Covenant you would be raising the issue(s) under.*
- *What recommendations would you suggest be made by the Committee?*

Phantasia's population is 54.7 million, 49% of them male and 51% female. Life expectancy has increased considerably over the same period, from an average of 45 years at the beginning of the twentieth century to 81.4 years today (79 years for men and 83.6 years for women). The population has been significantly ageing in recent years. In the mid-1950s, about a tenth (11 per cent) of the population was over 65 years of age; today, the figure is about a fifth (18.7 per cent, with a sex ratio of 43% male, 57% female) and it may reach a quarter (26 per cent) by 2050.

There is a recent National Institute for Gender Equality responsible for guaranteeing and promoting equality between men and women and combating all forms of discrimination and inequality based on sex, which research in the area of labour has been focusing on discrimination in employment based on maternity. For years, poverty among the older persons has been increasing in Phantasia. This increase applies differently to women and men. In 2016, the risk of poverty for women of retirement age was 19.5%, whereas it was 12.4% for men in the same age bracket. This disparity is mainly due to women's significantly lower pension entitlements compared to men. Periods spent in providing care for children or relatives in need of care are not counted as contribution periods. Although same-sex unions are now legal, it is not possible for same-sex widows/widowers to benefit from the spouse's pension.

At its last examination by CESCR, Phantasia was recommended to take immediate steps to improve the situation of older persons in nursing homes, allocate the necessary resources to training nursing care personnel and conduct more frequent and thorough inspections of nursing homes. The government has started to develop a National Strategy for Long-Term Care but progress has been slow. Recent media reports have brought to light again serious cases of ill-treatment in several public and private nursing homes across the country, especially in some of the more remote provinces. In addition, the number of persons benefiting from personal assistance services provided at home or day care provided in day care centers is far below the number of those who have applied for such alternatives to living in residential institutions, mainly due to a very limited number of day care centres, lack of trained care-givers, and the costs to the beneficiaries.

Phantasia has demonstrated a genuine commitment to improving public health and has aligned its recently adopted National Health Strategy with the European Health Policy Framework 2020. Still, the country's health expenditures are strongly dependent on the direct payments of the citizens, which are among the highest in Europe (almost three times above the EU average) and put at risk the access of vulnerable groups. In 2018, a system of online administration of health appointments in health services was introduced to reduce costs, and systems of phone appointments were scaled down very rapidly by the authorities.