



## Life is intergenerational by nature and so should EU action!

AGE Platform Europe General Assembly 2019

### Final Declaration

The European Parliament elections last May showed how deeply divided European citizens are. Public opinion is polarised on critical issues such as representative democracy, living-together and solidarity, migration and climate change. Young and old largely agree on the areas that governments should prioritise: fighting against poverty and unemployment, ensuring adequate income and support for all, guaranteeing access to education for every child and life-long learning opportunities regardless of age, introducing fair taxation, and ensuring a sustainable ecological transition. We stand side by side with young people expressing our mutual concern for the planet and fight for a sustainable future.

Representing 106 organisations of and/or working for older people as delegates of **AGE Platform Europe's members** from 24 countries gathered at the annual **General Assembly on 12 June 2019**, we wish to engage with our political and institutional actors to find solutions and address these major challenges, respecting the rights of **ALL** generations to fully contribute to and benefit from a more sustainable, equal and inclusive EU.

### **A new intergenerational contract is needed to sustainably support equality and social justice for younger and older generations**

A change of mindset is needed if we want to achieve a sustainable, equal and inclusive society. Especially in times of austerity, pervasive ageism justifies an 'age-based rationing' in the provision of public services, ignoring the impact that such cuts have on other generations and threatening the capacity of all to live in dignity. Such views turn age groups against each other and hinder the advent of a social contract that would address all common challenges in a fairer and more sustainable way.

Our socio-economic status, education, gender, household circumstances, physical and cognitive abilities, ethnicity, sexuality and the environment in which we live in impact us all throughout our lives. These structural inequalities concern us all. Children living in poverty will often face obstacles to fulfil their potential as adults. Unequal access to education, employment or health care at earlier stages will impact the quality of life in older age. The lack of quality affordable eldercare services will prevent younger relatives with care responsibilities from contributing fully to the labour market and increases gender inequalities in employment. This will eventually increase the precariousness of women in older age, who continue being the main care providers.



We believe that Europe can successfully tackle all these challenges if we design together a society for all ages. By enabling cooperation across generations, Europe will preserve its most precious natural resource: its human capital. A comprehensive life-course approach that supports solidarity within and between age groups will not only benefit individuals but society as a whole.

### **Act against ageism for the benefit of young and old**

We believe more than ever that action is needed to eradicate the ageism that pervades our societies, even fifty years after the term was first coined by Robert Butler M.D. Ageism continues to divide our societies into age groups perceived as having de facto conflicting interests. Even policies and laws enshrine age-specific approaches, thereby ignoring that life is intergenerational by nature. Whilst it is the opposite that is needed.

Empowering people at every stage of life and facilitating exchanges within and among age groups breaks down stereotypes and strengthens cohesion. Age equality and intergenerational fairness will eventually make our societies more cohesive and sustainable. Policy makers at all levels have responsibility to reduce ageism and promote intergenerational solidarity. These two objectives must be addressed in the current debate among the European institutions and national governments on EU priorities 2019-2024.

**To this end, AGE Platform Europe members welcome the 10 commitments of the EU Heads of State and Government in the [Sibiu Declaration](#) in particular *to protect our way of life, democracy and the rule of law and to uphold the principle of fairness*. Building on this broad pledge, we call on our governments, the newly elected European Parliament and soon-to-be nominated European Commissioners to do their utmost to build a collective project for EU integration and identity, based on shared values that bind EU citizens: social progress, inclusion and solidarity across generations and countries.**

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