



Open Letter to Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

-

Ageing deserves a White Paper

Brussels, 17 September 2021

Dear President,

On behalf of the members of AGE Platform Europe, the largest network of organisations of and for older persons in the EU, we would like to thank you for your continued commitment to ageing issues, which has resulted in the publication of the Green Paper on Ageing. We have actively supported this process by contributing to the consultation but also by encouraging our members to do so.

However, we must express our concerns regarding the follow-up that the European Commission will give to the Green Paper on Ageing. In your State of the Union address, you made a strong case for a better future for Europe's youth, which we, older people, applaud and fully endorse. Yet today's young people deserve equal opportunities and dignity when they will grow old. We missed a word about how you want to make our ageing societies a place for all ages. It hurts when you think of the heavy toll that older people paid during the pandemic.

The human potential of EU's ageing population must be supported by Commission's initiatives. The consultation on the Green Paper has mobilised millions of Europeans and our recommendations must not go unheeded. A topic as important as ageing deserves a comprehensive white paper. Because we recognise that this is a major challenge, we have developed a concrete proposal, namely an '[Age Equality Strategy](#)'. This proposal could fit into the initiatives proposed under the much-needed white paper.

Why such a strategy? The Age Equality Strategy will be a critical step to ensure coherence in the way ageing is addressed in EU policies, as today we lack a systematic mainstreaming of ageing. It would provide a comprehensive frame for the different issues addressed in the Green Paper, such as lifelong education and learning, access to health and care services, social



AGE work is co-funded by the **Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme** of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of AGE Platform Europe and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission. Transparency Register ID: 16549972091-86

protection, access to and inclusiveness of the labour market or the digital transition and the realisation of the EU treaty principle of solidarity between generations.

An Age Equality Strategy would also pave the way for a change in the discourse on ageing, based on equality and human rights, and would thus be in line with the EU's objective of building a 'Union of Equality'. So far, the Union of Equality has barely addressed the issue of ageing, while we have seen the persisting detrimental effects of age inequalities along the COVID pandemic.

Such a strategy would also be a strong and visible EU contribution to the United Nations Decade on Healthy Ageing and to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals for all age groups. At the United Nations, the world is waiting as well for Europe to take a leading role in securing the human rights of older persons.

We are committed to working with your services to share our experience and expertise, that of older people, to make concrete progress in the debate on ageing and the promotion of age equality. We remain at your disposal and look forward to pursuing our cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



Ebbe Johansen
President



Maciej Kucharczyk
Secretary General

Cc.

Dubravka Šuica, Vice-President for Democracy and Demography
Helena Dalli, Commissioner for Equality