



**Introductory Statement for the 10th Session of the UN OEWG on Ageing
by AGE Platform Europe
supported by 13 OEWG-accredited AGE members and partners**

Mr Chair,

I am speaking on behalf of AGE Platform Europe, the largest European network of organisations of and for older people. This statement is backed by 13 members and partners of AGE Platform Europe that are accredited in this group.

We are convening exactly 50 years after the word 'ageism' was first coined. Even though new evidence about the existence of the phenomenon has been published continuously since 1969, ageism remains largely invisible and highly prevalent. This in sharp contrast with the greater visibility of other forms of discrimination and the action taken to fight them.

Internalised ageist attitudes – which include considering older people as less able and less willing to live as equals in society and being worth less – are still pervasive.

Let's just look at the focus areas of this session. Access of older people to social protection remains inadequate, with low minimum pension

levels and insufficient or no access to care that often condemns older persons, especially older women, to live in poverty and exclusion. Discrimination and barriers in access to education and training are widespread.

Such realities build on the persistence of ageist prejudices in society, and also in policies and laws.

Mr Chair,

The creation of this group, 9 years ago, was a great step forward to ensure that the human rights system recognises and addresses the challenges faced by older people to enjoy equality and live free from discrimination.

The identification of focus areas, and the discussions around their normative elements, are good developments that we very much welcome. However, if states want this group to evolve and deliver, we need them to engage more actively in discussions. We call on them to highlight not only what works, but also the areas where there are gaps in the protection and promotion of the rights of older people.

Engaging in a meaningful dialogue with civil society in their home countries, before and after each session, is key to ensuring their submissions and statements reflect the experiences and realities of people as they age. It is also urgent that states include older people's organisations in their national delegations and support financially their participation to the sessions.

Let's not wait another 50 years to take ageism seriously. Let's discuss it honestly, and let's address it here and now.

Thank you.