



23rd July 2018

**Introductory Statement for the 9th Session of UN OEWG on Ageing
by AGE Platform Europe
supported by 14 OEWG-accredited AGE members and partners**

Mr Chair,

I am speaking on behalf of AGE Platform Europe, the largest EU network that represents more than 40 million older people, and the following 14 organisations that are accredited to the OEWG and are members or partners of AGE Platform Europe, namely, Age UK, APRE Portugal, BAGSO, Bulgarian Red Cross, 50+ Hellas, Fundació AROA, National Association of Pensioners of Malta, Older Women's Network Europe, Old'Up, Pass It On Network, Les petits frères des pauvres, SOLIMAI – Telefono Anziani Maltrattati, Spanish Confederation of older people's organisations (CEOMA), and Život 90.

AGE welcomes the increasing participation of government representatives in the last OEWG sessions and thematic panels, which demonstrates their commitment to advance the protection of

the rights of older people. We are however concerned that for *the third year in a row* the panels for this session do not include a single representative of an organisation of older persons. And this despite the fact that during the same period the number of accredited NGOs of older persons to the OEWG has substantially increased.

We believe that the discussions on the rights of older people cannot continue without the active participation of older people. Even though more and more NGOs are coming to New York to attend each session, still many of them are unable to participate due to the costs associated with their participation. Our discussions have little legitimacy unless they are informed by the views and experiences of older people on the ground. The lack of participation of older people in discussions that concern them is, precisely, one of the key obstacles in the enjoyment of human rights that this group is supposed to address.

This is why we would like to once more urge states to include older people's organisations in their national delegations and support financially their participation to the OEWG sessions. Governments and regional organisations should also organise discussions in advance of each session to gather the views of older people, but also meetings after each session, to inform NGOs about outcomes and plan for the following session. Moreover, we encourage the Bureau of the OEWG to intensify their efforts to make sure that there is a balanced representation of states, experts, NHRIs and NGOs in the panels of each session, paying due attention to the involvement of organisations that directly represent or work with older people. As we move towards a more substantive discussion, it is more important than ever that the voice of older persons is at the centre of this Working Group.

Thank you