



AGE Platform Europe

The voice of older persons at EU level

Toward Intergenerational Solidarity

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Toward Intergenerational Solidarity in ...

- **Participation, Employment and Equality**
- **Social Protection and Education**
- **A Digitalised World**
- **How to Foster Intergenerational Solidarity?**

Toward Intergenerational Solidarity

What is intergenerational solidarity?

- Life is intergenerational by nature
- Social cohesion between generations
- A society for all ages, young and old



“Solidarity between generations at all levels – in families, communities and nations – is fundamental for the achievement of a society for all ages.

Solidarity is also a major prerequisite for social cohesion and a foundation of formal public welfare and informal care systems.”

(Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 adopted at the United Nations Second World Assembly on Ageing, Para 42)

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Why is intergenerational solidarity increasingly important?

- Ageing societies
- Individualisation, weakened family structures, mobility, etc
- In the context of austerity, older people are often seen as a burden, as taking up younger people's jobs, as unproductive, dependent and helpless, as a silver tsunami and a threat to society.

But reality is different:

- Older workers are not replaced by younger ones
- Several health interventions and preventive screening are not offered to people beyond a certain age.
- 1 in 5 persons 65+ care for their grand-children at least once a week
- Many older people financially support their children and grand-children
- Older people work as volunteers, mentors, active in local organisations and politics.

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Common interests – common values

➤ Participation of all vs. ageism

Both young and old should be able to decide themselves as to how and when they wish to participate in societal processes.

This also applies to the question of age restrictions on active or passive voting rights. Age alone is not an appropriate yardstick for whether and when a person is able to participate in political processes.

Ageism is also manifested in institutional practices, for example the use of age limits govern access to services (loans, car rental, etc), training, education etc.

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Common interests – common values

➤ Poverty

Youth poverty and poverty in old age make autonomy and participation difficult.



Urgent task: to prevent and combat poverty in all circumstances, especially among single parents and their children.

Growing up in poverty significantly reduces the prospects of children and young adults.

Long-term unemployment represents a particularly high risk of poverty in old age.

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Common interests – common values

➤ Equality

Gender is still a major cause of inequality.

Gender-specific role attributions are widespread, and open sexism is on the rise.

Structural discrimination permeates many areas of life even in adolescence and triggers greater inequality in old age – the “gender pay gap” turns into the “gender pension gap”.



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Common interests – common values

➤ Digitalisation

The digital world poses new and partly diverse challenges for all generations.

In addition to **ensuring equal technical access for all**, issues such as copyright protection, securing network neutrality and data protection must be solved for people of all ages.

Digitalisation at the workplace is a matter of course for young people. For many older ones it can contribute to improving their skills – but also to getting overloaded and losing their job.

The **use of assistive technologies in nursing and health care** brings new opportunities, but also new dependencies. They can contribute to maintaining autonomy and independent living – and to social isolation and loneliness.



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Common interests – common values

➤ Intergenerational solidarity in the area of care

Many social challenges affect all generations. This is particularly evident in the area of “care”.

All improvements in the care system benefit not only those in need of care, but also their relatives and professional caregivers, including many young specialists and volunteers.

To prevent overstraining, arrangements need to be made that take account of the limits of all those involved and prevent violence and abuse.



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Common interests – common values

➤ Sustainable development

A major challenge for our society is the agreement on the global goals of sustainable development for everyone – across generations.

The major ecological, economic and social issues, the issues of human rights and peace cannot be resolved in isolation by nation states, and even less by single generations.

Particular emphasis of young and old: protection of the environment, long-term safeguarding of performance and equitably shared social prosperity

Opportunities in life must be guaranteed to all people, regardless of their age, origin or place of residence.



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How to foster intergenerational solidarity?

- Humans are dependent on each other, especially at the beginning and end of their lives.
- There are no substantial differences between the generations. There are points of contention across all generations – to proclaim everything to be an inter-generational problem or even conflict is nonsense.
- It goes without saying that problems cannot be solved unilaterally at the expense of one generation or another.
- Opportunities in life must be guaranteed to all people, regardless of their age, origin or place of residence.

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How to foster intergenerational solidarity?

- **Combat Ageism - challenge stereotypes** of older people
- Abolish all age limits, because the number of years of life says very little about abilities and skills.
- Create inclusive labour markets. Equal opportunities must be guaranteed for all, girls and boys, men and women.
- Education is essential. A changing world requires lifelong learning. Create intergenerational learning opportunities.
- Adapt our communities, for ex. by improving access to outdoor spaces so that generations can meet; strengthen support networks within neighbourhoods.

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How to foster intergenerational solidarity?

- Provide adequate social protection for young and old to ensure support, e.g. make LTC affordable and fair for all generations.
- Combat digital exclusion. All generations, young and old, rich and poor, must have the opportunity to profit from technological advances – but also have the right to live an autonomous life without digital and autonomous systems.
- Respect and appreciation are the basis for peaceful coexistence.



Thank you!

For more information:

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