



PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 13 October 2017

"Dignity + Independent living = DI" Conference

Protect the dignity of older people with care needs and allow for their independent and community living, wherever they choose to live

AGE Platform Europe congratulates the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Commission for organising the conference on "[Dignity + Independent living = DI](#)" on 12 and 13 October 2017 in Tallinn. This topic is highly relevant to AGE's fight for the rights and dignity of older persons including those with care needs.

AGE members have consistently stated achieving quality of care, allowing for independent living and protecting the dignity of older people as key challenges facing Europe today and also in the near future, given the rapid demographic ageing. *"Undignified care services, insufficient social protection and overburdening of care professionals and informal carers are all too common across Europe. This hinders the enjoyment of human rights by older persons with care needs and often leads to neglect, violence and abuse"*, stated AGE President, Ebbe Johansen, at the conference in Tallinn, adding that *"there is a serious lack of adequate, quality services for older persons with high care needs, including those living with advanced dementia, which has heavy personal consequences both for older persons and for their relatives"*.

AGE calls for an approach to **transition towards community-based care that is progressive and tailored to the specific needs of each group**. In the case of older persons, most of them wish to stay at home and should be empowered to do so, with enough quality support and integration in their communities to avoid the trap of isolation and loneliness, which is a huge problem among many older persons. However, some older persons prefer to live in residential care arrangements and this possibility should be made available to them as well. AGE members report good examples of innovative and quality care allowing for independence and community living both at home and in residential settings. They also report widespread 'institutional culture' in care provision, meaning ignoring personal wishes and needs, segregation, disrespect of rights and independence and neglect, both at home and in residential care. ***"Older persons are as diverse as other age groups and a wide variety of services to choose from should be available to them. The important point is to ensure choice, quality and dignified community-based services, whichever the setting. This***

is in line with article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), where choice is a central element, and also the [report on autonomy and care of the United Nations Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons](#)”, added Ebbe Johansen.

AGE calls for European Structural and Investment Funds to be used to facilitate the shift towards dignified and quality community-based care for older people, especially at home – the most popular option – but also in quality person-centered residential care. “Ensuring access to such services should guide the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, to be proclaimed hopefully by Member States next 17 November, and especially the new right to long-term care. The [European Quality Framework for long-term care services](#) developed with the active involvement of older persons, could be used in this process”, said Ebbe Johansen.

You may wish to read [AGE’s position on article 19 of the CRPD](#) and [our contribution to the consultation on the General Comment](#) to this article.

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Note to the editor

About AGE Platform Europe:



AGE is a European network of organisations of and for people aged 50+ aiming to voice and promote the interests of the 190 million citizens aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness of the issues that concern them most. www.age-platform.eu

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