



PRESS RELEASE

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United Nations: 140 countries jointly call for respect of the rights and dignity of older people and global solidarity

Time has come to adopt a new UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

On Monday 11th May, almost three quarters of the member states represented at the United Nations issued a joint statement recognising the escalating ageism, neglect and discrimination affecting older persons during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The statement recognises the meaningful participation of older people in society and the importance to strengthen international and intergenerational solidarity during the crisis and the recovery process. It supports a policy brief released on 1st May by the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on the impact of the pandemic on older people.

AGE strongly welcomes this statement and congratulates all European Union Member States and the EU for signing this important document:

“This statement is unprecedented both in terms of the comprehensiveness of its message and of the numbers of signatories. We are extremely pleased that the concerns raised by AGE in our [recent report](#) on the Human Rights of Older People during COVID-19 have been heard. We look forward to working with Heads of State and Governments in developing the legal safeguards and mechanisms that will allow for a better protection and promotion of human rights at all ages” said Anne-Sophie Parent, Secretary General of AGE.

The current pandemic has thrown into sharp relief how inadequate and inconsistent laws fail to equally protect human rights in old age and laid bare the need for a new UN convention to prevent further breaches in the future.

AGE and its member organisations at national level remain available to work in partnership with UN member states and EU representatives on the next steps. Without further delay, we urge to:

- **Reschedule as soon as possible the 11th session for the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing** (cancelled due to COVID-19) to advance the discussions on the gaps in the protection of human rights in older age and accelerate efforts to develop proposals for a new UN convention on the rights of older persons;
- **Advance on a common position at European Union level in favour of a new international instrument to protect human rights in older age**, following the example of the great progress brought by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) since its ratification by the EU in 2010;

- **Consult and partner with civil society organisations, including those representing directly older people**, in the development of measures related to the containment of COVID-19 and following recovery process, as well as any other policy measure planned for older persons.

Useful links

[AGE Webpage on COVID-19 and older people](#)

[AGE Policy Paper "COVID-19 and human rights concerns for older persons"](#)

[UN Secretary General Policy Brief \(1 May\) "The Impact of COVID-19 on older persons"](#)

[UN Member States joint statement, co-signed by 140 signatories](#)

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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