



PRESS RELEASE

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EU Pillar of Social Rights celebrates first anniversary:

Despite some positives steps forward a wider social strategy is still missing

One year after the adoption of the European Pillar of Social Rights, some small steps have been taken to take social policies better into account in the EU – however, in absence of a clear social strategy for Europe, important topics remain unaddressed. AGE calls for a more inclusive European Semester and for further initiatives to implement the pillar.

'One year ago the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights by the European Council, European Parliament and European Commission raised great hope among EU citizens that social policies would be better prioritised in the EU', said Anne-Sophie Parent, Secretary General of AGE Platform Europe. 'The Pillar proclaimed 20 principles which include the right to long-term care and to health care, as well as the right to adequate old-age income, to life-long learning, and active labour market support which are all important for the participation of older people in society. However, a clear social agenda to implement these promises is still lacking'.

AGE has just released its [position on the European Semester 2018](#), showing that important advances have been made, by assessing EU member states' healthy life expectancy, paying attention to life-long learning and stressing work-life balance. However, many barriers that prevent older people from exercising their social rights are not addressed in the Semester, such as the investment gap in long-term care, the lack of accessibility of physical and digital environments, or the difficult situation of older jobseekers. Instead of emphasising the potential opportunities linked to ageing, demographic change is still seen as a burden to the public purse which needs to be contained.

Hosting a [two-day conference of NGOs](#) to mark the first anniversary of the Pillar of Social Rights, the Portuguese government supported the calls from AGE and other Social Platform members, to emphasise the implementation of the Pillar. *'The main challenge faced by the European Union and its Member States is the ability to ensure consistency between economic, employment and financial policies with a view to strengthening the social dimension'*, said José António Vieira da Silva, Portuguese Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security at the conference in Lisbon.

As Philippe Seidel, AGE Policy and EP Liaison officer stated at a workshop on participation and engagement of older people of organised by [BAGSO](#) - AGE member organisation - in Frankfurt on 20 November:

‘While the Pillar of Social Rights has introduced key social principles in the EU policy making, key legislation such as the proposal on carers’ leave to support informal carers are still challenged by some member states. One year before the Europe 2020 Strategy ends, there is still no clear vision on how the EU Pillar of Social Rights or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations will be implemented in Europe.’

Since the proclamation of the Pillar in November 2017, AGE has been calling for a plan of action to implement all 20 principles, taking into account the European Social Charter and the SDGs and addressing the pressing challenges to make demographic change an opportunity for all in Europe.

END

Useful resources:

- [AGE position on the European Semester 2018](#)
- [Pillar of Social Rights & European Semester - AGE participates in policy seminar](#)
- [“Building Social Europe”, Flagship conference by Social Platform](#)

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 200 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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