



PRESS RELEASE

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EU Pillar of Social Rights: Strengthen the European social acquis to build an inclusive and age-friendly EU

In light of the multiple crises that Europe is facing and the growing scepticism towards the European project, the European Union should send a clear message towards greater fairness and solidarity. An ambitious action in the social field has the potential to change the citizens' vision of the EU.

In its contribution to the European Commission consultation on a 'European Pillar of Social Rights', AGE Platform Europe highlights the key role social rights play in empowering older citizens as equal citizens. Equal rights to quality and affordable health and long-term care, to adequate pensions to live in dignity, to age-friendly working conditions and an inclusive labour market, and to access goods and services are all indispensable to allow Europe to adapt to demographic change and make it an opportunity for all citizens.

'Next to climate change, technological evolution, migration, the legacy of the economic *crisis and accumulated inequalities, demographic ageing is a major challenge facing Europe*', said Anne-Sophie Parent, AGE Secretary General. ***'We have many of the keys to take advantage of ageing and to build better and healthier lives for all, but this needs to be supported by concrete actions, in particular in the social field. The European Pillar of Social Rights should be one of them.'***

As the Europe 2020 Strategy is approaching its final stage, it is important to renew on our key social commitments to boost employment and tackle poverty. Europe is still suffering from the economic crisis, and older people are no exception: the gender pension gap is close to 40 % and poverty persists among many older women, the oldest old, those who were not able to build an adequate pension, or older persons whose income has eroded in time, in particular due to the growing costs of healthcare. The individualisation of old-age dependency risk with increased out-of-pocket payments for healthcare is undermining the universal character of health care that is as part of the European social welfare model. Pension reforms delaying the age of retirement are hitting vulnerable groups, such as the 48 % of people between 55 and 64 who are not in employment, not yet in pension and who have very low prospects of finding a job.

AGE therefore urges the Commission for an ambitious proposal of the Pillar of Social Rights to address these challenges. The Pillar should be safeguarded in the European Semester process and EU macroeconomic policies. A guideline for the implementation of the Pillar with regard to older people should be the article 25 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, which guarantees the right of older persons to live independently and in dignity. Other standards, such as the ILO core

convention and the Council of Europe Social Charter should also be further used to inspire this new Pillar.

'The fight against age discrimination and the promotion of dignity in old age should be upfront in the implementation of the social rights', concluded AGE Secretary General.

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Useful links

- [AGE response to EU consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights \(pdf\)](#) :
- [European Commission, Towards a European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

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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