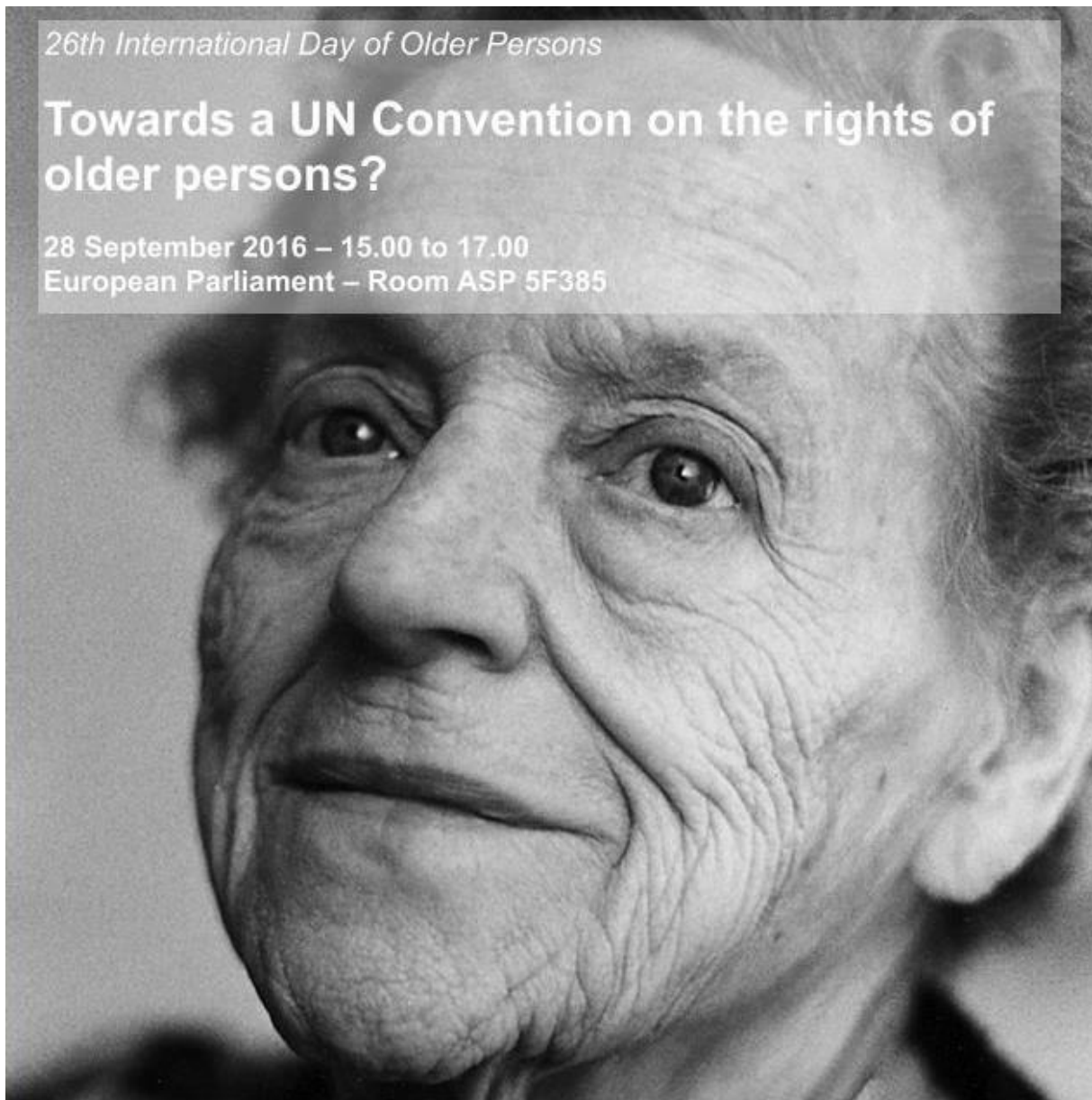


*26th International Day of Older Persons: Take a stand against ageism!*

## **Towards a UN Convention on the rights of older persons?**

Background note for speakers and participants



### **Where and when**

28 September 2016

14:30: Meeting to enter the European Parliament : ASP entrance (for a map see last page)

15.00 – 17.00

European Parliament, Room ASP 5F385



## Rationale for the event

The human rights of all individuals in Europe, including older persons, are protected in various binding international and regional human rights conventions. However, international human rights conventions do not specifically address age discrimination or refer to older persons. Regional human rights laws also do not protect older persons' rights systematically or comprehensively.

In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly established an Open-Ended Working Group to identify possible gaps in the existing international framework of the human rights of older persons and how best to address them, including exploring the possibility of a new international convention on the rights of older persons. Political support for a new Convention is growing, although the EU is still opposed to this. The UN Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Older Persons in her final report called on Member States 'to consider the various proposals that have been made, notably the elaboration of a convention on the rights of older persons'.

This event will open an EU dialogue and offer an update on recent developments at the UN Open Ended Working Group and its impact on European Member States and older persons in Europe. It will moreover discuss action that can be taken at EU level to promote the rights of older persons.

## UN International Day of Older Persons (1<sup>st</sup> October 2016)

The theme of the 2016 United Nations International Day of Older Persons (UNIDOP) is: **Take a Stand Against Ageism**. It aims to draw attention to and challenge negative stereotypes and misconceptions about older persons and ageing.

*Ageism is a widely prevalent and prejudicial attitude that stems from the assumption that age discrimination, and sometimes neglect and abuse of older persons is a social norm and therefore, acceptable. It is a reality in some form in all societies, and finds expression in individuals' attitudes, institutional and policy practices, as well as media representation that devalue and exclude older persons.*

### Key messages for the 2016 UNIDOP

- Ageism is extremely prevalent in today's societies; yet it is often subconscious and hard to acknowledge.
- Ageism shapes how older persons are treated and perceived by their societies, leading to discrimination in medical settings, workplaces, laws, the media, the economy and many other areas.
- Ageism limits older persons' potential, impacts their health and well-being and hinders their contributions to social, economic, cultural and political life.
- Old age does not mean decline, uselessness and burden.
- Older people are not just old; they are full citizens with equal rights to everyone else.
- Age discrimination is neither normal, nor acceptable; it's a breach of rights!
- Opportunities and rights should not diminish in old age; older people should not be deprioritised, excluded, neglected or offered less resources or services.
- Fighting ageism means empowering and encouraging older people to play an active role within their societies.



## Recent developments

The Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons has published her final report. This can be found on the Human Rights Council website at: [http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/33/44](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/33/44). In the report, the Independent Expert concludes that:

- Older persons face a number of particular challenges in the enjoyment of a wide range of their human rights;
- Despite several good practices, the implementation of existing law and national strategies fails to address the full spectrum of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of older people;
- The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) is not sufficient to ensure the full protection of the rights of older persons;
- The UN Open Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG) should fulfil its mandate to present proposals on the main elements of an international legal instrument (convention) to the UN General Assembly.

Slovenia is among the EU countries that are pioneering to promote the rights of older people in the global agenda, striving to enhance international norms and standards, and supporting further codification of international human rights law. Last April the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, in collaboration with Bled Strategic Forum, held the International Conference *Ageing: Rights for Empowerment*. Gathering representatives of States, regional and international organisations, experts as well as civil society, the conference aimed at discussing the current state of protection of the rights of older people as well as possible future action to improve the existing policy and legal framework. The meeting took stock of the existing normative framework and provided an opportunity to discuss best practices of rights-based approaches to ageing. There was broad participation by EU governments in this high-level meeting (about 15 Member States were represented), which showcased an increasing understanding on the need to improve the protection of older people's rights using the available mechanisms but also discussing the potential of a new UN Convention. This event will build on the outcomes of that conference and discuss how to move forward the agenda at EU level. The report of the event is available [here](#).

## Objectives of the event

This is the first event held at the European Parliament specifically focusing on the rights of older persons. Conceived as a working meeting, organisers aim to increase awareness among MEPs and other European stakeholders about the ongoing international debate on older people's rights and to strengthen consultation and action at EU level on this topic. We hope that this will be one of many EU-level events discussing how to apply article 25 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights on the Rights of the Elderly and how to achieve progress including by considering the added value of a new UN treaty.



More concretely, we would like to discuss:

- How to increase participation of the European Parliament in the global debate on older people's rights, including the added value of a UN convention for the rights of older persons;
- How to ensure that older people are consulted at national and EU level in advance of the OEWG so that Member States' and EU's positions are informed by the views of older persons;
- How to build on the conclusions and recommendations of the Independent Expert at EU level;
- How to follow-up on the Slovenian '*Ageing: Rights for Empowerment*' conference;
- How to engage NHRIs at national and European level, taking stock of their expertise and findings on challenges faced by older people on the ground.

### Resources

- AGE Platform Europe (2015) [Older Persons' Self Advocacy Handbook – An online to engaging in processes in the Human Rights of Older Persons](#)
- AGE Platform Europe (2016) [Position Paper on Structural Ageism](#)
- European Network on National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) [project on the human rights of older people in long-term care](#)
- World Health Organization (WHO) [Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health](#) (2016-2020) on leading a [Global Campaign to Combat Ageism](#), to support local and international partners in their efforts to change policies and practices
- [UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing](#)
- UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/OlderPersons/IE/Pages/IEOlderPersons.aspx>

### Twitter

We will use the following hashtags to disseminate the discussions and conclusions of the event and invite you to do the same: **#UNIDOP, #OlderPeoplesDay, #rights4elders**

Twitter accounts: **@AGE\_PlatformEU, @ENNHRI, @EPP**

### For more information

- Nena Georgantzi, Policy Officer, AGE Platform Europe : [nena.georgantzi@age-platform.eu](mailto:nena.georgantzi@age-platform.eu)
- Philippe Seidel, Policy Officer, AGE Platform Europe: [philippe.seidel@age-platform.eu](mailto:philippe.seidel@age-platform.eu)
- Alicia Gomez Campos, Project Officer, ENNHRI: [alicia.gomezcampos@ennhri.org](mailto:alicia.gomezcampos@ennhri.org)



## Agenda

15.00 – 15.05 Welcome and introduction, **Lambert van Nistelrooij, MEP from the EPP Group, Coordinator of the Intergroup's subgroup on Active Ageing, European Parliament**

15.05 – 15.20 Setting the scene: UN discussions around a new Convention on the rights of older persons, **Bridget Sleep, Senior Rights Advisor, HelpAge International**

15.20 – 15.30 UN Convention on the rights of older persons: the view of older persons in Europe, **Anne-Sophie Parent, Secretary General, AGE Platform Europe**

15.30 – 15.40 Older persons' human rights in long term care: lessons learnt from monitoring in six European countries, **Lora Vidovic, Croatian Ombudswoman, Chair of ENNHRI**

15.40 – 15.50 UN Convention on the rights of older persons: the view of an EU Member State, **Darja Bavdaž Kuret, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia**

15.50 – 16.00 UN Convention on the rights of older persons: reactions from the European Commission, **Johan ten Geuzendam, Advisor— Directorate D. Equality. DG Justice and Consumers**

16.00 – 16.30 Debate with the audience

16.30 – 16.55 Reaction from MEPs

- **Ivo Vaigl, MEP from the ALDE Group, Vice-President of the Intergroup on Active Ageing, European Parliament**
- **Jean Lambert, MEP from the Greens, Vice-President of the Intergroup on Active Ageing, European Parliament**

16.55 – 17.00 Closing remarks, **Lambert van Nistelrooij, MEP from the EPP Group, Coordinator of the Intergroup's subgroup on Active Ageing, European Parliament**

### Meeting point

Participants who need accreditation will be expected at 14h30 in front of the ASP entrance of the European Parliament (on the Esplanade next to Place du Luxembourg):

