



## AGE Platform Europe

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## Written contribution to agenda item 5 (j) Roadmap to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building on Health 2020, the European policy for health and well-being: lessons learned from Health 2020

“Empowering people at every stage of life and facilitating exchanges within and among age groups breaks down stereotypes and strengthens cohesion. Age equality and intergenerational fairness will eventually make our societies more cohesive and sustainable. Policy makers at all levels have responsibility to reduce ageism and promote intergenerational solidarity.”

AGE Platform Europe General Assembly 2019  
Final Declaration

Looking ahead to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we welcome the initiative led by the WHO for a **Decade of Healthy Ageing** based on three pillars: age-friendly cities and communities, integrated care and long-term care with the mainstreaming of ageism across these priorities.

From the strong cooperation we have developed over the last ten years with the WHO and its Regional Office for Europe, we are convinced that such a Decade is useful to develop and strengthen synergies and make healthy ageing a true reality for everyone, including older persons.

WHO Regional Office for Europe has a long-standing expertise in relation to healthy ageing as demonstrated by [Health 2020 – A European policy framework supporting action across government and society for health and well-being](#) and the [“Strategy and action Plan for Healthy Ageing in Europe \(2012-2020\)”](#). As a region, Europe can definitely play a leading role while benefiting from the experience of other regions.

As civil society organisations committed to healthy ageing and/or representing older persons in the European Union, we strongly support the WHO proposal for a Decade of Healthy Ageing and make it a true success focusing in particular on ageism, age-friendly cities and communities and, long-term care.



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## Ageism:

Ageism leads to widespread marginalisation, poverty and abuse of older people and has negative impacts on their health and well-being. Ageism is everywhere, but we tend to deny its negative effects, we do not consider it as serious and harmful as other forms of discrimination and we fail to act to counter ageism

This is why AGE Platform Europe set up the [“Ageing Equal Campaign”](#) end of 2018 to raise awareness on this issue, supporting the effort at global level both from the WHO<sup>1</sup> and the Open Ended Working Group on Ageing<sup>2</sup>.

We will continue this effort, in particular to strengthen intersectionality and address the diversity of older persons, acknowledging the specific needs of specific groups such as older women, LGBTBI older persons, persons with disabilities or older persons with migrant background<sup>3</sup>. The approach is key to ensure nobody is left behind.

Linked to this issue, it would also be important to consider the questions of statistics and data: for instance, there is gap when it comes to violence against older women, since most of the time data stop at the age of 60. We would also like to underline that indicators based on the concept of “premature death” tend to support the idea that above a certain age value of life is not the same and exclusively assimilate “productive” years to “working” years.

## Age-friendly Cities and Communities/resilient communities and supportive environments

Back in 2007, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the WHO to support the development of age-friendly cities and communities within the European Union. Between 2014 and 2016, we closely collaborated with WHO Europe through projects funded by the European Union in order to develop tools and supports for local and regional authorities willing to adapt their environment to older persons. We have also developed a network, the European Covenant on Demographic Change<sup>4</sup> to foster dialogue with all relevant and interested stakeholders ready to commit implementing age-friendly cities and communities. Now both AGE Platform Europe and the European Covenant on Demographic Change are Network Affiliates of the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities and continue to be “spokesperson” and to establish bridges between actors for this programme,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/ageing/ageism/en/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/>

<sup>3</sup> For the latter group, the WHO Regional Office for Europe has already developed a policy brief “Health of older refugees and migrants” <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-determinants/migration-and-health/publications/2018/health-of-older-refugees-and-migrants-policy-brief-2018>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.agefriendlyeurope.org/>



we and our members, consider essential to support healthy ageing and independent living and, to foster solidarity between generations.

From our point of view, it will be of great added value to build stronger synergies between the work carried out by the European Healthy Cities network and the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. These programmes have complementary approaches and are key to meet the challenges of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular #3, 11 and 13 – making sure that the impact of climate change and air pollution is considered from a life-course perspective approach.

### **Long-term care, including rehabilitation and palliative care**

Recent cases reported in the media from different European countries show how much long-term care is an important topic. Despite very wide differences in accessibility and availability of long-term care within Europe, there are serious issues consistently reported across the region. These include the unavailability of services, the lack of choice regarding the preferred care option and the living arrangement, the lack of affordability, the poor quality, isolation and segregation, discrimination in access based on health condition, and restrictive and abusive practices, among others. According to a study of the ILO, around 30% of older persons lack access to quality long-term care in the European region.

Being at European<sup>5</sup> or global level with the UN OEWG on Ageing<sup>6</sup>, we will continue our effort to encourage and Member States, as well as local and regional authorities, developing affordable, quality and holistic care and support services, as part of the social protection system.

The WHO Regional Office for Europe could play a leading role in this crucial topic ensuring a holistic and coordinated approach of long-term care taking also into account rehabilitation and palliative care, staff shortages and underqualification. This would also help to ensure a paradigm shift from disease-oriented approaches towards goal-oriented approaches more suitable to address multimorbidity. A coordinated effort with other international organisations such as the ILO, the OECD and the European Commission would be welcome to work on the investment case for long-term care, as well as to develop methodologies to measure the cost of inaction.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Work notably led by the European Commission with the European Pillar of Social Rights – principle 18 on long-term care - [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights_en)

<sup>6</sup> Discussion at UN level within the Open Ended Working Group on Ageing on Long-term care and its normative elements (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> sessions).



### **Co-signatories:**

- Alzheimer Europe
- Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries (COTEC)
- European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC)
- European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD)
- European Public Health Association (EUPHA)
- International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM)
- International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care
- International Union of Toxicology (IUTOX)
- Towards Unity for Health
- World Federation of Occupation Therapists (WFOT)
- Worldwide Hospice and Palliative Care Alliance (WHPCA)

### **Who we are**

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**AGE Platform Europe is a European network of non-profit organisations of and for people aged 50+,** which aims to voice and promote the interests of the 200 million citizens aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness on the issues that concern them most.

Our vision is that of an inclusive society for all ages, based on solidarity and cooperation between generations, where everyone is empowered to participate fully and enjoy life in full respect of their rights while fulfilling their duties and responsibilities.

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