

Manifesto for European Parliament Elections 2019

Achieving equal rights and dignity for older persons



AGE Platform Europe is the largest European network of organisations of people aged 50+ representing directly more than 40 million older people in Europe. AGE aims to voice and promote the interests of the 190 million inhabitants aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness of the issues that concern them most.

Why this Manifesto?

In 2017, nearly one fifth (19%) of the EU population was aged 65 and more. Moreover, the importance of the very old (aged 80 years or above) is growing at a faster pace than any other age segment of the EU's population. Their share in the EU28 was projected to more than double between 2017 and 2080, from 5.5% to 12.7%.

Many older women and men are making significant contributions to society, for example as workers, through mentoring young people, caring for grandchildren or relatives. Yet [ageism](#) still restricts the autonomy and poses barriers to the full and equal participation of older people in different areas of individual and community life. Respect for dignity and autonomy are universal human rights that apply to persons of all ages and central prerequisites to effective and meaningful participation in society. The United Nations 2030 Agenda and [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\)](#) fulfil the pledge to leave no one behind.

At EU level, the solemnly proclaimed [European Pillar of Social Rights \(EPSR\)](#) and the **European Semester** together with other EU strategies, such as the **Digital Single Market (DSM)** provide an adequate framework for Member States to take action to protect older persons' rights and gender equality in old age. The future EU budget should help to deliver on EU post 2020 social and non-discrimination objectives, while a renewed political impulse is needed to unblock the proposed horizontal non-discrimination directive.

The **European Parliament** has been the champion in advocating for social justice and equality. The 2019 EP elections come at a turning point for the European Union which urgently needs to reconnect with its citizens and represent their interest. We wish a forward-looking EU where not only economy and growth matter, but where concrete action is taken to ensure that everyone is valued and empowered to lead an active and autonomous life regardless of age, gender, race or ethnic origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.

AGE key recommendations

Pursuing our aim of an **age-friendly European Union** and supporting the reflection on an international **Convention on the rights of older persons** taking place at the **UN Open Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA)**, we call on candidate MEPs to ensure that elimination of age discrimination will become an identified EU priority on equal foot to all other grounds of discrimination in EU treaties, and to take action to:

- Enhance older persons' rights through combating ageism and age-discrimination
- Ensure a life-course perspective on work and create inclusive labour markets
- Ensure adequate pension and old-age income for both women and men
- Protect the right to live and age in dignity through adequate person-centred health and long-term care accessible to all
- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages
- Enable universal access to goods and services in today's digitalised society including for older persons
- Empower older citizens to fully participate in the social and democratic life.

As future MEP, AGE calls on you to push for the EU to support member states to develop national strategies on ageing with the active involvement of older persons and their organisations. Finally we count on your commitment to re-establish in the European Parliament the **Intergroup on Ageing and Solidarity between Generations** to keep ageing issues high on the EP's agenda.

What can candidate MEPs do?

SDG 3/8/16
EPSR 3/7/20
OEWGA

Enhance older persons' rights through combating ageism and age-discrimination and put pressure on your government to:

- Ensure that the directive on equal treatment in the access to goods and services is finally adopted, and the full implementation of the Accessibility Act ensured.
- Monitor the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and ensure it is equally applied to older persons with disabilities
- Monitor the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and of the EU gender equality provisions and ensure they are equally applied to older women;
- Support the debate at UN level around a possible international legal instrument to strengthen the protection of the human rights of older persons.

SDG 5/8/10/11
EPSR
1/2/3/4/5/9/10/
11/13
OEWGA

Ensure a life-course perspective on work and create inclusive labour markets and put pressure on your government and social partners to:

- Fully implement the Employment Equality Directive 2000/78/EC and promote awareness campaigns on the importance to fight ageism in the workplace; make age-friendly working conditions a reality with a special attention put to flexible end-of-career opportunities;
- Adopt an ambitious directive on [work-life balance](#), including paid carers' leave for informal carers. Call on the EU Commission and member states to go further, proposing a Council Recommendation on Social Protection and Services for informal carers – most of whom women – that would guarantee access to pension credits, minimum income, health insurance and the maintenance of rights to unemployment benefits to informal carers who have dropped out of the labour market;
- Value older people's skills and knowledge in the labour market, and recognise the need to facilitate longer working life through more effective action to combat age discrimination in employment and occupational training;
- Seize the potential of intergenerational transfers of knowledge, create jobs which value respectively older and young workers' skills, and allow both age groups to grow professionally and adapt to the changing labour market;
- Support the implementation of the proposed Council Recommendation on the Social Protection for Workers and Self-Employed, paying attention that gaps in social protection coverage in all forms of employment are effectively closed;
- Scrutinise the implementation of the Council Recommendation on [Long-Term Unemployment](#) and support the European Network of Public Employment Services to help older jobseekers including older people in forced inactivity;
- Fund research on sustainable workplaces and durable employability based on up-skilling and life-long learning and promote results across the EU action and initiatives;
- Apply life-cycle approach to the workplace which ensures healthy working environments and fosters interaction, cooperation, transfer knowledge and solidarity between different age groups.

SDG
1/2/5/8/10/
12/13
EPSR
2/3/12/14/15
OEWGA

Ensure adequate pension and old-age income for both women and men and put pressure on your government to:

- Adopt a framework directive on [adequate minimum income](#) to live in dignity including minimum pension, taking into account not only the relative at-risk of poverty line, but also age specific reference budgets based on a basket of goods and services;
- Call for a European Strategy to close the [gender pay, career and pension gaps](#), addressing the challenges of both women still in employment and retired older women for whom positive changes in labour markets come too late;
- Step up EP and national parliamentary [scrutiny of the European Semester](#), especially bearing in mind the challenge faced by statutory pensions to effectively protect from poverty;
- Support the role and responsibilities of the European Supervisory Authorities of financial markets, ensuring adequate financial and human resources to protect long-term returns, encourage sustainable investment strategies and enforce consumer's rights in capital-based pension schemes;
- Adopt a European legal initiative to give [access to adequate social protection](#) to people in all – standard and non-standard – forms of employment and analyse the barriers that prevent people from exercising this right. It should contain universal and equal access to social protection rights, benefits and entitlements, quality healthcare, minimum income security and access to the goods and services defined as necessary at national level – in line with the related ILO recommendation, providing an effective social security net, which can be deployed in hard times;
- Adopt policies to protect older persons' assets and empower them to make informed financial decisions.

SDG 16
EPSR 16/18
OEWGA

Protect the right to live and age in dignity through affordable and person-centred health and long-term care and put pressure on your government to:

- Enforce effectively the right to quality and affordable long-term care and support that allows older people to live in dignity, remain autonomous and independent, and get fully involved in their communities;
- Adopt a Council Recommendation on long-term care, stating the key principles and evidence-based recommendations for the development of long-term care and support services across the EU;
- Develop the economic case for the formalisation of long-term care for older people and ensure that the EU leaves enough fiscal space to member states to improve quality of LTC and access for all who need care and support;
- Monitor [the role of the private sector](#) in long-term care in terms of quality and affordability of services, and explore how the EU could better regulate this growing market;
- Work towards the adoption of an EU Action Plan on combatting elder abuse, including through [better identifying and protecting victims](#) and improve working conditions of both formal and informal carers in home and residential care.

SDG 2/3/6
EPSR 1/2/16
DSM
OEWGA

Ensure active and healthy ageing and promote well-being for all ages and put pressure on your government to:

- [Promote physical and mental health through a life course perspective approach](#) in all EU policies under the coordination of DG SANTE;
- Ensure a strong Health programme and budgetary priority to [health promotion, disease prevention and reduction of health inequalities](#) in the EU post 2020 research programme;
- Continue supporting the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing as a key initiative to improve the healthy life year expectancy across the EU;
- Reenergise the Geriatric Medicines Strategy and raise the profile of the Geriatric Expert Group of the European Medicines Agency;
- Provide a robust healthcare infrastructure and use digital innovation at EU level to improve people's health [at all ages](#) while pursuing the objectives set in the Digital Single Market;
- Prioritise the fight against old-age loneliness and social isolation affecting approximately one-third to one-half of the older population and resulting in adverse health conditions.

SDG 7/8/9/11
EPSR 17/19/20
DSM
OEWGA

Enable universal access to goods, housing and services to older persons and put pressure on your government to:

- Strengthen the EU legislation, initiatives and standardisation work related to accessibility in today's highly digitalised society, including the European Accessibility Act, as well as ensure a proper implementation at national level;
- Continue supporting the development of a European Silver Economy Strategy allowing the development of accessible and affordable products and services supporting active and healthy ageing;
- Promote and support the development of age-friendly environments at local and regional level as a key mean to support independent living and mobility for all with the support of EU funding instrument;
- Take ageing dimension into account in smart local housing, urban development and public transport. Support independent living through the development of home-based ICT, intelligent housing and digital and web-based services;
- Ensure that the ageing dimension is considered across the different domains of the EU Research programme to better address the different perspectives of EU demographic ageing.

SDG 4/10/16/17
EPSR 1/2/3
DSM
OEWGA

Empower older citizens to fully participate in the social, cultural and democratic life and promote life-long learning to facilitate their active involvement in all aspects of life:

- Make the European Parliament a central place to discuss issues of equal rights for all ages and solidarity between generations by supporting the re-establishment of the Intergroup on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations;
- Ensure that e-Government and access to elections is supported for voters of all ages;
- Fight against ageism in political sphere and encourage older persons to stand as candidates for local, national and European elections;
- Recognise and support all various social and economic contributions older people bring to our societies, in particular to younger generations;
- Call for the recognition and support to the work of older volunteers via programming and funding of social funds and Erasmus+; fund research activities to assess the economic value of volunteering by older people;
- Call for EU initiatives to close the digital gap, including by European funds investing into digital infrastructure and supporting measures to increase digital skills of all age groups in the update of the European Education and Training Strategy ET2020;
- Combat digital exclusion and respect the right of any citizen to use traditional technologies (i.e. analogue) in order to support older persons' right to participate equally in society;
- Call for strong users' involvement/co-creation/co-design in EU research and standardisation work;
- Ensure that the new General Data Protection Regulation is implemented in a way that takes on board the specific challenges faced by older citizens due to the digital divide;
- Include older citizens in civil dialogue on sustainable development and intergenerational transmission of knowledge, values and culture.

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Sustainable Development Goals relevant for older people

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| Goal 1 No poverty | Goal 10 Reduce inequalities |
| Goal 2 Zero hunger | Goal 11 Sustainable cities and communities |
| Goal 3 Good health and well-being | Goal 12 Responsible consumption and production |
| Goal 4 Quality education | Goal 13 Climate action |
| Goal 5 Gender equality | Goal 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions |
| Goal 6 Clean water and sanitation | Goal 17 Partnership for the goals |
| Goal 7 Affordable and clean energy | |
| Goal 8 Decent work and economic growth | |
| Goal 9 Industry, innovation & infrastructure | |

European Pillar of Social Rights and its principles relative for older people

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| 1. Education, training and life-long learning | 12. Social protection |
| 2. Gender equality | 13. Unemployment benefits |
| 3. Equal opportunities | 14. Minimum income |
| 4. Active support to employment | 15. Old age income and pensions |
| 5. Secure and adaptable employment | 16. Health care |
| 7. Information about employment conditions and protection | 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities |
| 9. Work-life balance | 18. Long-term care |
| 10. Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection | 19. Housing and assistance for the homeless |
| | 20. Access to essential services |

Digital Single Market (DSM)

The Digital Single Market denotes the strategy of the European Commission to ensure access to online activities for individuals and businesses under conditions of fair competition, consumer and data protection, removing geo-blocking and copyright issues.

UN Open Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA)

The Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing was established by the General Assembly on 21 December 2010 in the objective of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons. In particular, the working group will consider the existing international framework of the human rights of older persons and identify possible gaps and how best to address them, including by considering, as appropriate, the feasibility of further instruments and measures.



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