



This year theme for the 26th International Day of Older Persons, 1 October, 2016, is 'Take a Stand against Ageism'

'Ageism is an erosion of human rights'

To mark the 26th International Day of Older Persons and stress the importance to combat against ageist attitudes, AGE Platform Europe held an event 28 September at the European Parliament in Brussels

"Towards a UN Convention on the rights of older persons" was organized in partnership with the EPP group of the European Parliament and the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI)

This event highlighted the pervasiveness of ageism and opened the dialogue for an international convention on the rights of older persons at EU level

29 September 2016. 'Ageism is an erosion of human rights', highlighted Anne-Sophie Parent, Secretary-General of AGE Platform Europe, at a joint event organised by AGE, the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) and the EPP group of the European Parliament on 28 September. The Secretary General, AGE Platform Europe, talked about the UN Convention on the rights of older persons with a speech about the view of older persons in Europe, in an event which opened an EU dialogue and offered an update on recent developments at the UN Open Ended Working Group and its impact on European Member States and older persons in Europe.

Towards a UN Convention on the rights of older persons? was held Wednesday, 28 September 2016 from 15.00 to 17.00 at the European Parliament, Room ASP 5F385 as part of the 26th International Day of Older Persons which will be held next Saturday, 1 October, 2016. The event highlighted the pervasiveness of ageism. Building on the 'assumption that older people's lives are less worthy and that old age means decline and uselessness', ageism "leads to degrading treatment of older people and limits older persons' potential, impacts their health and well-being and hinders their contributions to social, economic, cultural and political life", Ms Parent explained.

"This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 635316"



The event also highlighted the importance of a new international convention on the rights of older persons. ‘Making the fight against ageism a policy priority would definitively bring more coherence and efficiency to EU policies addressing demographic change’, says Anne-Sophie Parent.

'Take a Stand Against Ageism'

The theme of the 2016 International Day of Older Persons, 'Take a Stand Against Ageism' “challenges everyone to consider ageism –the negative attitudes and discrimination based on age- and the detrimental impact it has on older people”, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), which calls on everyone to rethink our views and attitudes towards the older generation.

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 formally opposed to this. 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, while older people who feel they are a burden may also perceive their lives to be less valuable, putting them at risk of depression and social isolation.

Ageism is the discriminatory attitude based on the ground of a person’s age. It rests “on the assumption that discrimination against older persons is the norm and acceptable. It manifests itself in both individual and institutional behaviours and decisions that have a significant negative impact on the lives of older persons, contributing to their marginalization and social exclusion”, according the United Nations Social Development Network. Research shows that older adults with negative attitudes about ageing may live 7.5 years less than those with positive attitudes. “Older women are further disadvantaged by attitudinal factors approving the use of violence, ageism and sexism, particularly cultural values and social systems”, says the United Nations Social Development Network.

Structural ageism is largely tolerated by our societies; those same societies which in parallel acknowledge the necessity of increasing older people’s social and economic participation in order to address the rapid ageing of the European population. According to the World Health Organization, “the International Day of Older Persons is an opportunity to highlight the important contributions that older people make to society and raise awareness of the issues and challenges of ageing in today’s world”. This year, the WHO challenges everyone “to identify and question these internalized ageist attitudes and to understand the serious impact that these attitudes have” and the UN encourages to Take a Stand Against Ageism.

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Age Platform Europe (AGE)



AGE Platform Europe is a European network of approximately 130 organisations of and for people aged 50+, representing more than 40 million older people in the EU28. AGE work covers a wide range of policy areas that impact on older and retired people, such as anti-discrimination, employment of older workers and active ageing, social protection, pension reforms, social inclusion, health, elder abuse, intergenerational solidarity, research, accessibility of public transport and of the built environment, and new technologies (ICT). The Platform also takes an active part in several EU projects, mainly funded by the H2020 Programme.

The purpose of AGE's work is 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. AGE seeks to give a voice to older and retired people in the EU policy debates, through the active participation of their representative organisations at EU, national, regional and local levels, and provides a European platform for the exchange of experience and best practices. It also aims to inform older people on their rights as EU citizens or residents and on EU policy- making processes and recent EU policy developments.

<http://www.age-platform.eu/>

ATHLOS Project

The ATHLOS (Ageing Trajectories of Health: Longitudinal Opportunities and Synergies) is a five-year project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme. Focusing on research and innovation, ATHLOS aims to achieve a better understanding of ageing by identifying patterns of healthy and active ageing and their determinants. The project will ascertain risk and protective factors, their interactions, the life stages when they impact health the most, and how modifying these factors—through promotion, prevention and timely clinical and public health interventions—can improve the health of individuals and populations. This deeper understanding of ageing will also result in a more realistic definition of 'old age' rather than the standard chronological approach applied so far.

To measure projections in each specific population and guide policy recommendations, existing longitudinal studies on ageing will be harmonised and a single metric of healthy ageing will be created. The new definition will then be used to calculate projections in each specific population and support adapted policy recommendations. ATHLOS will merge large sets of variables from longitudinal databases (at least 20 longitudinal studies) derived from several European and international studies. The Consortium will create and analyse a harmonised data set that includes the longitudinal studies identified, comprising more than 341,000 subjects. Experts from the areas of demography, sociology, clinical medicine, epidemiology and public health, health statistics, economics, data management, and public policy will be involved in this research.

The ATHLOS Consortium is coordinated by Dr Josep Maria Haro (PSSJD) and comprises 14 partners from 11 European countries: PSSJD, Spain; University College London (UCL), United Kingdom (UK); King's "This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 635316"



College London (KCL), UK; UAM, Spain; Spring Techno, Germany; Internationales Institut Fuer Angewandte Systemanalyse (IIASA), Austria; Karolinska Institutet (KI), Sweden; Schweizer Paraplegiker-Forschung (SPF), Switzerland; Terveyden Ja Hyvinvoinnin Laitos (THL), Finland; Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Neurologico Carlo Besta (FINCB), Italy; Uniwersytet Jagiellonski (UJ), Poland; University of Southampton (SOTON), UK, Harokopio University (HUA), Greece and AGE Platform Europe (Belgium-EU)...

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Dissemination

dissemination.athlos@uam.es

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