



Policy Booklet

# AGE Recommendations to the new EU leaders

European Parliament – European Commission

**Part 1** – AGE Manifesto for the European Parliament elections 2014 (February 2014)

**Part 2** – AGE Questions to be asked to the candidate President of the European Commission (June 2014)

**Part 3** – AGE recommendations and questions to the candidate Commissioners (expected in September 2014)

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## Towards a EU Strategy on Demographic Change

Europe is ageing. We are all ageing.

Demographic and climate changes are both major challenges facing Europe. They are also the two main areas where huge opportunities for economic growth, innovation and social justice can be developed in the coming decade.

The newly-elected or appointed EU leaders will have a key role to play to **reinforce the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy** to ensure fair and sustainable growth and prosperity of European citizens at every stage of life.

In this framework, a **EU Strategy on Demographic Change** should become a main vector for economic growth and help EU Member States and regions adapt to the needs of their rapidly ageing populations in ways that are sustainable and fair to all generations and ensure equality between men and women. In other words, it will help create an **Age-Friendly European Union**.

AGE calls on EU leaders to adopt an EU Strategy on Demographic Change to help coordinate and **build synergies between EU policies on which demographic change has an impact**.

In this context, AGE Platform Europe has developed this Policy Booklet comprising: Part 1) recommendations to newly-elected MEPs (AGE Manifesto), as well as Part 2) questions to be asked to the President of the European Commission, and Part 3) questions to be asked to future Commissioners.



## Part 1

# MANIFESTO

for the  
European Parliament  
Elections 2014

We call on the candidate MEPs to look to creating an **Age-Friendly European Union** through ensuring that EU policies and initiatives will:

- 1- Promote equal opportunities and the realisation of human rights for all
- 2- Guarantee the adequacy, fairness and sustainability of Europe's social and health protection systems
- 3- Ensure universal access to goods and services, in particular to the built environment, ICT, mobility and public services
- 4- Support the right to grow and age in good mental and physical health
- 5- Create age-friendly labour markets and economy
- 6- Involve older persons in all policy and research processes that concern them
- 7- Protect the right for all to live and die in dignity

AGE Platform Europe calls for the re-establishment of the Intergroup on Ageing and Solidarity between Generations to keep these issues high on the EP's agenda.



## 1. Promote equal opportunities and the realisation of human rights for all

**Fight against age and multiple discrimination in all relevant policy processes, notably by unblocking the draft Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, proposed by the European Commission in 2008**

**Background:** The European Commission explored the feasibility of extending equality legislation beyond employment and proposed in 2008 **Draft directive** (COM(2008) 426 final) **to combat discrimination on the ground of age, disability, religion and sexual orientation outside employment**. This proposal is still under discussion by Member States in the Council of Ministers. Unfortunately a small number of Member States are against this proposal and it is therefore blocked. [This draft directive](#) covers equal access to goods and services and is a major step forward in achieving a European Union free of discrimination. However it includes specific provisions (art 2.6 and 2.7) which would allow Member States to have a wide margin of appreciation of what could be considered justified differential treatment with regard to age in access to social protection, insurance and financial products.

**AGE position:** AGE is working with the different EU Presidencies to ensure that the wording of these paragraphs does not severely weaken the effective protection of older people by the EU law. For example, we have sent a [letter](#) to the Lithuanian Presidency regarding an amendment proposed by the Irish presidency about a new provision on preferential treatment by commercial actors for different age groups.

For more information, you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 23, or consult the draft proposal [here](#).

**Enhance the protection of older persons' human rights, in particular by ensuring the EP involvement in the drafting of the EU's position within the framework of the UN Open-ended working group on ageing, providing thus**

## **the EU with a clear mandate by its citizens; call for the establishment of a EU multi-stakeholder dialogue group to discuss the rights of older persons**

**Background:** The [Open-ended working group on ageing](#) (OEWG), established by the UN General Assembly in 2010 is mandated to consider the international framework of the human rights of older persons and to identify possible gaps and how to best address them. Several UN countries and civil society are arguing for the need for a new UN Convention for older people. The EU, which is actively involved in this debate through its External Action Unit, is opposing to a new instrument. Although the EP has a particular expertise and plays a leading role in the promotion of human rights, so far it has not been engaged in the discussions around a strengthened protection of the rights of older persons at the EU and global level. The Human Rights Council also recently established an Independent Expert on the rights of older people (see the decision [here](#)). In its report on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU in 2012, the EP called for greater involvement of EU institutions and improved multi-stakeholder dialogue on the challenges which older people face in the full application of their human rights.

**AGE position:** AGE members acknowledge that a lot of policies and legislation are age-blind and age discrimination and ageism are inherent to all aspects of life. For AGE a UN legal instrument such as a Convention on the Rights of Older Persons is needed to fully understand how existing human rights apply to older people and can be effectively enforced as part of the UN system (see AGE position [here](#)). Our action at the UN complements the work that we already do at the European level, both within the EU and the Council of Europe and we aim to improve synergies between actions at various levels. This is why we sent a [letter](#) to VP Reding, Mr. Lambrinidis and other EU stakeholders, including the AFET and DROI committees asking for the establishment of a multi-stakeholder dialogue group on the rights of older people arguing that there is currently a lack of consultation of EU institutions and civil society in this debate and a lack of coherence between EU's internal and external action. This initiative will live up to EU's commitment to protect the rights of all citizens, to bring the EU closer to its citizens and to increase its transparency.

For more information, you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 74-75, or consult the dedicated-UN website [here](#).

## **Mainstream the Council of Europe's Recommendation on the promotion of the human rights of older persons into the EP work**

**Background:** The Council of Europe (CoE) Drafting Group on the Human Rights of Older Persons (CDDH-AGE), completed its mandate in September 2013, delivering the Draft Recommendation on the Promotion of the Human Rights of Older Persons, which was adopted by the Committee of Ministers in February 2014. This soft law is an important step towards understanding the challenges that older persons face in the full enjoyment of their human rights and what Member States can do to address them.

**AGE position:** AGE has actively participated in the work of the CDDH-AGE bringing a pragmatic approach from the point of view of older persons. We now aim at a wide dissemination and implementation of this instrument, which will improve awareness of older people as equal rights holders and will strengthen the protection of their rights on the ground. The EP should take into account the rights enshrined in this text throughout its work and adequately address in studies, reports, resolutions, recommendations and legislative proposals issues that impede the full realisation of the human rights of older people on an equal basis with others. The EU should moreover consult older persons in all processes that affect them, a principle included in the CoE recommendation.

For more information, you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 73-74, or consult the dedicated page on the Council of Europe's website [here](#).

## **Monitor the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, bearing in mind the intersection of age and disability**

**Background:** The EU has ratified the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD). In a letter addressed to AGE, Vice-President Reding has mentioned that *“Given that the vulnerability of older persons to violation of their rights is often linked to disability that comes with ageing, the UNCRPD provides protection to the most vulnerable older people”*. Besides, the UNCRPD committee has affirmed in a letter sent to the CDDH-AGE (see [here](#)) that the majority of older persons are considered as persons with disabilities for the purposes of the Convention, while the majority of persons with disabilities are in fact older persons. The EU should therefore take into account the intersection of age and disability in the implementation of the UNCRPD and address multiple discrimination that older persons with disabilities face.

**AGE position:** For AGE, although the UNCRPD does not include a specific provision on older persons, like it does with women and children, its implementation should take due account of the intersection of age and disability clarifying how it applies to the following 3 categories of older persons:

- Persons with disabilities as they age
- Older persons who acquire age-related disabilities
- Older people who may not experience disabilities but are discriminated by others due to perceptions that they face disabilities due to their age

By not specifically addressing how the UNCRPD applies to age-related disabilities we risk creating two standards of protection based on when disability occurs. In fact many EU Member States currently have different systems of protection for younger and older persons with disabilities. The EP should work to ensure that the UNCRPD implementation at EU and national level is not age-blind.

For more information, you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 13, 26 and 51.

## Enhance gender equality in access to financial and insurance products, in particular through the monitoring of the implementation by insurers of the EU rules on gender-neutral pricing (ECJ ruling C-236/09 on Test-Achats)

**Background:** The EU's highest Court ruled in 2011 on the Test-Achats case (C-236/09) that different insurance premiums for women and men are not compatible with the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights. As of 21 December 2012, no further differentiations in insurance premiums and benefits for women and men are permitted in the EU. The Commission adopted end of 2011 Guidelines on the application of Council Directive 2004/113/EC to insurance, in the light of this judgment and is expected to present in 2014 a report on the implementation of the directive on equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services.

**AGE position:** In collaboration with the European Women's Lobby (EWL), AGE is fighting discrimination against older women in access to financial services and promotes gender equality in private pension and savings schemes. We aim for an effective implementation of the directive and the ECJ ruling so that women no longer suffer from less favourable conditions in private pension schemes compared to men. The EP has an important role to play as a watchdog of how EU legislation is applied in practice by the Member States and propose ways to address implementation and protection gaps.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 24-25, or consult the ECJ ruling [here](#).

## Improve the image of older people and promote a more positive vision of ageing in the EP work, e.g. calling for action to combat age stereotypes in the media

**Background:** Despite the fact that older people are healthier and live active and productive lives for much longer, stereotypes about older people and old age die hard and affect every aspect of seniors' lives. Ageism is prevalent in the image that the media give of older people while it is still very common in publicity advertising to picture older people in a negative way.

**AGE position:** AGE members consider that the media should take an approach to ageing that shows older people as they really are (some are highly competent achievers; others face huge challenges to remain active due to poor health, poverty or social exclusion) and that avoids negative stereotypes or raising conflicting issues between generations. Building on the achievements of the European Year 2012 on active ageing and solidarity between generations (EY2012), the EP should promote a positive image for ageing, support initiatives aiming to create a society for all ages and call for action to combat age stereotypes in the media.

**Monitor the situation of the most vulnerable groups of older people such as older women, older persons with disabilities, older migrants, ethnic and religious minorities; including Roma, older lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersexual (LGBTI), older people experiencing poverty and disadvantage, and older people in isolated rural communities**

**Background:** The discrimination that older men and women face is complex, often based on two or more factors, such as age and gender, ethnic origin, disability, poverty, sexual orientation and other factors. For instance, according to a recent [FRA survey](#), older Roma women face more health inequalities than other groups. The particular challenges of these vulnerable EU citizens often remain invisible to EU policymakers.

**AGE position:** On the occasion of the European Year 2012 on active ageing and solidarity between generations (EY2012), AGE in collaboration with other non-discrimination networks has launched a series of policy papers on the challenges of older persons at risk of multiple discrimination, providing specific recommendations to the EU and national level. The EP should address the difficulties faced by the most vulnerable older persons in accessing their fundamental rights in EP reports and legislative initiatives.



## **2. Guarantee the adequacy, fairness and sustainability of Europe's social protection and social inclusion systems**

**Ensure the effective application of the Lisbon Treaty's transversal social clauses 8, 9 and 10 in the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy while integrating a strong social dimension into the European Semester**

**Background:** The last EU Treaty, the Lisbon Treaty (2009), contains a transversal "social clause" whereby social issues (promotion of a high level of employment, adequate social protection, fight against social exclusion, etc.) must be taken into account when defining

and implementing all policies. The aim is to ensure that policymakers at EU and national levels keep a close eye on the social impact of all new legislation. Social dimension is also firmly placed in the Europe 2020 Strategy through the headline targets on poverty and employment.

More recently, in its communication on the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), the European Commission pointed out the persisting social and economic divergences among EU Member States as a major challenge for further development of the EMU. To deal with criticism regarding the lack of social considerations in economic policy coordination, further deepening of social integration has been proposed, in particular by introducing a new scoreboard of social and employment indicators.

**AGE position:** AGE believes that a close monitoring of the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty's transversal clauses 8, 9 and 10 should be carried out; in particular the EU and national budgets together with fiscal measures must comply with Article 9 and its requirements to guarantee adequate social protection and fight against social exclusion. However, the Commission's proposal for an enhanced social surveillance through the five indicators (EC communication on social dimension in EMU) seems not enough to ensure a genuine social dimension into macroeconomic reforms. AGE calls on the European Commission and EU Member States to mainstream Europe 2020 Strategy's social objectives into the European Semester process by introducing common rules and procedures to help assess whether economic reforms deliver also social progress and improve socio-economic cohesion in the EU.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 33.

### **Guarantee adequate income in old age for all as the fundamental goal of any pension model, notably by implementing the EU agenda on pensions, taking the EP resolution on an Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions (2012/2234(INI) as a basis**

**Background:** The European Commission issued in 2012 a 'White Paper: An Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions', outlining necessary measures at European level to support and complement national pension reforms. The White Paper proposes a more holistic approach to pension reforms – a proposal that AGE is supporting – for instance through looking for synergies among all relevant topics, such as: longer working lives; gender equality; the internal market for pensions; mobility of pensions across the EU; the future solvency regime for pension funds to better protect employees' entitlements or informed decision-making and governance at EU level.

**AGE position:** AGE believes that EU coordination should cover all pension schemes in an integrated way to support EU Member States' efforts towards adequate and sustainable pensions. Such holistic approach is also necessary to overcome challenges

raised by increasingly blurred boundaries between pension schemes and by the on-going shift from the pay-as-you go to funded schemes. Moreover, AGE calls to monitor within the Europe 2020 Strategy framework Member States' progress in ensuring adequate pensions i.e. indexation of public statutory pensions to allow older people to keep up with progress in society and to prevent old age poverty as a result of the erosion of their income over time.

AGE has been calling upon national and European policy makers for many years now to improve gender equality at all ages and address the social impact of the shift from statutory pay-as-you-go to funded schemes and from defined-benefit to defined-contributions pension plans (see separate point on gender equality).

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 33.

### **Call on the European Commission to table a Directive on minimum income, including minimum pension, as a tool to fight against poverty among all age groups – this should be equivalent to at least the poverty threshold defined as 60% of the national median equalised disposable income**

**Background:** In its Resolution of 20 October 2010 on the 'Role of minimum income in combating poverty and promoting an inclusive society in Europe' the European Parliament stated that a minimum income should be guaranteed in the EU under a framework directive. The agreement of a common EU definition of adequacy and of common methods to establish pension adequacy should inform an EU Framework Directive on Minimum Income and would mark a historic advance in EU cooperation to achieve higher level social standards.

**AGE position:** AGE calls on the European Commission to table a directive on minimum income, including minimum pension, as a tool to fight against poverty and prevent social exclusion among all age groups – this should be equivalent to at least the poverty threshold defined as 60% of the national median equalised disposable income. The right to minimum income schemes, including minimum pension, should be recognised as a fundamental right to ensure everyone's dignity and independence i.e. in line with the Article 1 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 37.

### **Promote reference budgets for an adequate income – based on a basket of goods and services adapted to different age groups' needs – in order to assess whether poverty threshold allows a decent life and guarantees personal dignity across the life cycle**

**Background:** The EU's Recommendation on active inclusion published in 2008 outlines the following conditions for the calculation of a minimum income for all: first, the individuals concerned need to participate in the process of defining adequacy, and, secondly, the income level must enable people to participate fully in society and realise their own goals. This recommendation did not refer directly to older people as a separate target group, but rather dealt with the issues of employment, adequacy of minimum income schemes and access to services from the perspective of the economically active population. However, because all the issues above are relevant to older workers and also have direct impact on the situation of pensioners, older people's organisations and AGE have been following the policy developments within on active inclusion. Moreover, in its Europe 2020 strategy conclusions, the European Council emphasized the need to improve measurement of poverty.

**AGE position:** AGE supports the definition of a minimum level of income people need to live in dignity as a crucial step in the struggle to combat poverty. Therefore, AGE calls on the development of budget standards for an adequate income in old age based on a basket of goods and services for different old age sub-groups. Such adequacy of old-age income should also be based on a broad consensus among older people and validated by experts on what one needs to live a decent life in old age – this should include non-monetary aspects such as access to quality health and social care, decent housing, leisure and social activities or civic participation.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 37.

## **Transpose EU poverty reduction target – as set out in the European Platform against Poverty – in all relevant national and EU policy processes**

**Background:** Launched in 2010, the European Platform against Poverty (EAPN) is part of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Platform seeks to play a coordinating role among national social inclusion policies by identifying best practices and promoting mutual learning, setting up EU-wide rules, and making funds available to support fight against poverty and promotion of social cohesion. In the framework of the Platform, EU Member States agreed for the first time ever a common EU target to reduce the number of people living in poverty and social exclusion by 20 million by 2020. National governments have to translate this overall poverty reduction target into their national contexts.

**AGE position:** AGE believes that the analysis of measures to prevent old-age poverty should not be limited to the capacity of social protection schemes to cover exclusively basic goods or requirements – the aim is rather to take into account the fact that adequacy must apply to a longer period of life as a pensioner i.e. living sometimes more than 40 years. Moreover, EU Member states need to translate the overall EU headline target on poverty reduction at national level and break it down by age and gender in order to focus social inclusion policies on combating old-age poverty among specific sub-groups, such as older women, single older people or those living in rural areas, people from ethnic

minorities or older migrants etc. Last but not least, AGE advocates for the use of reliable poverty measures at national and EU levels combining all existing methods and approaches, such as relative income poverty and material deprivation indicators – in order to provide the most accurate picture of the social realities and specific risks faced by all population groups including older people

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 19, 24 and 25, 36

### **Mainstream gender equality into all EU policy processes to ensure the same access to adequate social protection in old age for women and men**

**Background:** The majority of older people in all EU Member States are women and the highest poverty rates are concentrated amongst very old women. Both older women and men suffer from inequalities in terms of social protection. However, today most women are still additionally affected by their maternity history, as well as by informal caring responsibilities which restrict their access to good quality employment. On-going pension reforms introduce a closer link between pension income and contributions. This means that if pension benefits and old-age income depend on people's contributions, while the level of contributions depend on wages and career work paths, most women will continue to get low or very low benefits when retired.

**AGE position:** AGE work aims to guarantee individual and adequate pension rights for all to ensure a dignified life in old age – including those with justified career breaks, mainly women. When private funded schemes are encouraged or imposed, AGE advocates for compensation in pension schemes for time spent on family caring i.e. contribute on behalf of women caring for children and older dependents. This should be accompanied by measures enforcing gender equality in employment to ensure an adequate retirement income for women – it is through the life-cycle approach that social protection based on equal gender opportunities in earlier life can prevent poverty in old age. Last but not least, for women coming into or already in retirement with inadequate social protection rights as result of gender inequalities in their past work (career breaks, low paid jobs) – other compensation measures are crucial e.g. survivor benefits, pension indexation or adequate minimum income schemes.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 24, 25

### **Support the development and adoption of a European Quality Framework for Long-term Care Services inspired by the WeDO project**

**Background:** The WeDO (Wellbeing and Dignity of Older people) project was an EU-funded Pilot project on preventing elder abuse that run from 2010 to 2012. Coordinated by

AGE Platform Europe, it gathered 18 partners from 12 countries. WeDO developed a European Quality framework for long-term care services and an EU-wide partnership of organisations committed to disseminate and promote it. The framework introduces a **vision for quality long-term care services in Europe**, supported by specific **quality principles and areas of action** for the quality of services for older people in need of care and assistance. The quality principles are inspired by the Social Protection Committee 'voluntary quality framework for social services'.

It also contains **recommendations** for implementation for different target groups and at different levels, with examples of quality development, control and labelling tools; and a **methodology** which explains how to implement the principles and lists areas of action by developing a participatory approach in a quality improvement process. This methodology is inspired from the World Health Organisation improvement cycle of the Age-friendly Cities Program and is illustrated by examples of initiatives using the participatory method. It provides a list of around 30 **good practices** from 12 different countries and EU-wide.

The framework is translated in 11 languages, and can be downloaded [here](#).



### 3. Ensure universal access to goods and services, in particular to the built environment, ICT, mobility and public services

**Promote accessibility in all areas to support independent living and decrease the cost of dependency on public budgets while improving the quality of life for all, notably by calling for a strong and ambitious European Accessibility Act**

**Background:** The European Commission has published a multiannual European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 whose overarching goal is the continuous and sustainable improvement in the situation of persons with disabilities in economic, social and participatory terms. Accessibility is at the heart of the strategy and is defined as meaning

that people with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, transportation, information and communications technologies and systems (ICT), and other facilities and services in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The midterm evaluation of the Strategy concluded that "tackling accessibility barriers will only be achievable over the long term, which will require ongoing commitment at EU and MS level". In its work programme 2012, the European Commission has foreseen the adoption of an Accessibility Act, a set of legislative measures to improve access to goods and services for persons with disabilities and elderly persons, based on the concept of Design for All. The proposal has been delayed for more than a year. In December 2013 at the occasion of the EU day for people with disabilities, the European Commission conveyed a high-level meeting with both businesses and civil society representatives to exchange views on the forthcoming Accessibility Act.

**AGE Position:** Considering the demographic change occurring in Europe today, it is obvious that ensuring the development of an accessible and supportive environment will help reduce the demand on care and assistance for the rapidly growing number of older people. Promoting accessibility in a pro-active way does not hamper the economy, but benefits society and the economy in general by lowering the disability threshold which makes life easier for everyone and supports labour market participation of persons with disabilities and an active and productive participation of older persons in their communities.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 51 or consult the European Commission Roadmap to the European Accessibility Act, available [here](#).

## **Set accessibility as a pre-condition for all EU funding which supports the development of infrastructure**

**Background:** Accessibility is part of the so-called "ex-ante conditionalities" of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to ensure that any infrastructure, notably for transport and building environment, are not developed without taking into account accessibility which is a key element for the active involvement of persons with disabilities and older persons.

**AGE Position:** Accessibility is an essential prerequisite and it is obvious that any new infrastructure that is developed, especially with the support of EU funding, should be made accessible. It is important to ensure that all EU funding programmes, above all the ERDF, takes into account this dimension to avoid any discrepancy between the EU anti-discrimination policy and other EU policies and initiatives. It is also a clear requirement since the EU has ratified the UN Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities. Taking into account accessibility for any new infrastructure is a human right matter but also economically relevant.

## Support standardisation initiatives as a key tool to enhancing accessibility and design-for-all

**Background:** The European internal Market comprises an area without internal frontiers in which free movement of goods, services, persons and capital is ensured. Declaration 22 annexed to the final Act of the Amsterdam Treaty provides that the EU Institutions shall take account of the needs of persons with a disability in drawing up policy initiatives. To achieve this it is important that standards describing the characteristics of goods and services in the Internal Market include adequate accessibility provisions and that other provisions in those standards do not introduce accessibility barriers. Standards that consider the diversity of needs of the population and their functional diversity following a Design for All approach will favour the development of products and services that are accessible for all including persons with disabilities and older persons. Design for All aims to enable all people to have equal opportunities to participate in every aspect of society. To achieve this, the built environment, everyday objects, services, culture and information – in short, everything that is designed and made by people to be used by people – shall be safe, accessible, independently usable and convenient for everyone in society to use and responsive to evolving human diversity.

**AGE Position:** Standardisation is of great importance to improve accessibility since this technical tool can facilitate the development of accessible goods and services from onset. Nevertheless, standards do not go hand in hand with accessibility, since it depends very much on their content and the way they are developed. It is worth noting that countries with high accessibility standards in the build environment, transport and ICT are the countries where the highest levels of employment of both older women and men are found and those which perform best in terms of Healthy Life Year indicators.

The European Commission has issued a mandate – the so-called Mandate 473- to CEN and CENELEC (Two of the European Standardisation Organisations) to mainstream Design for all in the relevant standardisation initiatives, AGE is actively involved in that work which should begin more concretely in the course of 2014.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 52 or consult the Mandate M473 [here](#).

## Support e- and web-accessibility to enable and further improve access to information and services for all

**Background:** The European market for web-accessibility related products and services is estimated at EUR 2 billion. It could grow significantly, as less than 10% of websites are accessible. The number of websites providing e-government services (about 380 500 in the EU) and public sector websites (over 761 000 in the EU) is growing rapidly. Most Member States have already either enacted legislation, or taken other measures on web accessibility. However, significant differences exist between these laws and measures.

The non-harmonised national approaches to web-accessibility create barriers in the Internal Market. Therefore, the European Commission published in December 2012 a legislative proposal on the accessibility of public sector websites aiming at harmonising the national measures for the public sector as a necessary condition to put an end to this fragmentation and lack of confidence in the web accessibility market.

**AGE Position:** In its proposal for a directive on the accessibility of public sector bodies' websites, the European Commission makes recommendations in order to strengthen and harmonize the accessibility of public administration websites within the EU. With the increasing amount of essential data available online, it is crucial to enable everyone to have access to this information. Harmonised rules and procedures will furthermore have positive impact on the economy in reducing costs and facilitating exchanges within the Single market.

AGE has been promoting web accessibility at EU level since this is of key importance to avoid the digital divide among the older population and support seniors' social inclusion and active participation in society. As for the proposal, AGE has asked for an extension of the scope to really encompass websites which are key for daily life and to make it comprehensive considering the rapid development of the technologies, in particular the increasing use of smart phones.

The results of the first reading vote at the EP in February 2014 were promising and AGE hopes these results will be undertaken by the Council.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 51 or consult the legislative file on the EP website [here](#).

## **Support the European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities as a tool to adapt urban spaces to the needs of the EU's ageing populations**

**Background:** Launched in July 2012, the European Innovation Partnership for Smart Cities and Communities (EIP SCC) brings together cities, industry and citizens to improve urban life through more sustainable integrated solutions. To do so, it includes applied innovation, better planning, participatory approaches, higher energy efficiency, better transport solutions, intelligent use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), etc. More particularly, it looks to reduce high energy consumption, green-house-gas emissions, bad air quality and congestion of roads, and to overcome bottlenecks impeding the changeover to smart cities, and to help coordinate existing city initiatives and projects, by pooling its resources together.

**AGE Position:** For AGE this initiative is very complementary to the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing, in particular the horizontal action on “age-friendly cities, buildings and environments”. Integration between the smart, sustainable and inclusive dimension would help to deliver better results for citizens and to shape environments answering to the need of an ageing society.

For more information, you may consult the EIP SCC website [here](#).



## 4. Support the right to grow and age in good mental and physical health

### Promote physical and mental health and a life course perspective in all EU policies to ensure active and healthy ageing

**Background:** Health promotion is one of the EU competences and it is actually a crucial dossier for the coming decades and the ageing of the population. The Directorate General in charge of health and consumers (DG SANCO) is paving the way for stronger EU public health policy.

**AGE Position:** an (ageing) population in good health means less strain on health systems and an overall benefit for the society, including for the labour market. In the past, the European Commission has taken several initiatives in that field, e.g. the EU alcohol strategy, the EU Platform for actions on diet, physical activity and health, joint action on cancer, the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-Being. Now there is a clear need for a new step to pave the way forward action since some of these initiatives have been weakened. A better health impact assessment of EU legislation and initiatives is also a critical point to avoid contradictory approaches. Basically the issue is to ensure a concrete implementation of the European Commission Staff Working Document “Investing in Health” (2013) that was embedded in the Social Investment Package.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 41 or consult the European Commission dedicated website on health, available [here](#).

### Give a budgetary priority to health promotion, disease prevention and reduction of health inequalities

**Background:** different funding tools exist at EU level in the health area and have just been agreed for the next period 2014-2020, notably the Health for Growth Programme, Horizon 2020 and the EU programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI). Their global priorities have been defined, still the concrete content of the calls will be of importance in order to allocate the funds each year.

**AGE Position:** In order to support active and healthy ageing, it is very important to prioritise health promotion, disease prevention and reduction of health inequalities in the

different funding instruments. Indeed there is a need to continue building the cases of early intervention and to have a comprehensive mapping of its impact not only from a financial perspective but as well as a benefit for the whole society. Although medical and pharmaceutical research is important, it is necessary to find the right balance to really have a positive impact on healthcare budget. Likewise, it is essential to invest more to fight more effectively health inequalities which affect vulnerable populations and thus to give priority to it in EU relevant funding programme.

### **Consider investment in care services for older dependent persons as an investment in support for employment and not merely as a cost to public budget**

**Background:** Since the launch of the euro, clear rules to ensure sound public finances have been in place in the form of the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP), which sets the well-known limits for budget deficits and public debt of 3% and 60% of GDP, respectively. In 2011 the Commission proposed two further Regulations to strengthen euro area budgetary surveillance. This reform package, the so-called 'Two-Pack', enters into force on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2013 in all euro area Member States. The new measures mean increased transparency on their budgetary decisions, stronger coordination in the euro area starting with the 2014 budgetary cycle, and the recognition of the special needs of euro area Member States under severe financial pressure.

**AGE Position:** It is clear that all processes linked to the overall framework of the economic and fiscal policy coordination at EU level is a key component that shouldn't be overlooked. Both the European Semester and the Stability and Growth Pact impact the daily life of citizens since they have an influence notably on health budgets. AGE believes that we need to consider a paradigm shift between what could be seen as expenses and investment. Indeed in the area of care services for older dependent persons, the dedicated funding by local, regional or national authorities are today considered as expenses, whereas we could consider them as an investment since they create jobs in the white sector and alleviate the burden on informal carers allowing them to be back on the job market.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 17-18 (European Semester) and p.42-43 or consult this [Memo](#) prepared by the European Commission.

### **Ensure access to safe and adequate medicines and treatments for all as well as independent and transparent information on these medicines and on the outcomes of clinical trials**

**Background:** the European Commission is working in the area of medicines and treatments mainly through two main dossiers: the Clinical trials and the Information to patients Directive. The Clinical Trials Directive is currently being revised at EU level in order to improve trials' procedures. The proposal for a Directive on Information to patients

aims at establishing harmonised rules on the provision of information on medicinal products subject to medical prescription. The proposal is blocked at the Council for a while. The controversy around it is pretty high considering the sensitivity of information on medicines.

**AGE Position:** The consumption of medicines increases with old age and older people and health professionals need to be made aware of the inappropriate use of medicines and the consequences linked to over /under consumption and/or interaction of medication. It is therefore crucial that patients, their physicians, nurses and pharmacists get reliable and independent information about the medicines older patients use. At the same time the drugs used by older people have not been tested in their age target and gender group. The principles underlying the development of drugs, clinical testing and post-market assessment of older and new medicines should be equity, evidence and efficiency. This is one of the main demand of AGE regarding the revision of the clinical trials directive. Last but not least, there is a clear need to strengthen the work of the European Medicines Agency on medicines for older people, like it is now done for paediatric medicines.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 44-45 or consult the EP legislative file on Clinical trials [here](#) and on Information to patients [here](#).

## **Support the implementation of the European Innovation Partnership on active and healthy ageing and assess progress achieved in increasing by two years the Healthy Life Years indicator by 2020**

**Background:** Launched in November 2010 in the frame of the Innovation Union flagship, the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP AHA) has been selected as a pilot to tackle the challenge of an ageing population. It sets a target of increasing the healthy lifespan of EU citizens by 2 years by 2020, and aims to pursue a triple win for Europe by: (i) improving health and quality of life of older people, (ii) improving the sustainability and efficiency of care systems and iii) creating growth and market opportunities for businesses. The EIP AHA brings together public and private stakeholders (up to 3000 so far) to accelerate the deployment of major innovations. It plays a part in achieving some of the objectives that the EU set itself for 2012 in the context of the European Year 2012 for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

**AGE Position:** Within the EIP AHA, AGE has decided to work more specifically on age-friendly environments, cities and buildings in order to bring a comprehensive and more global approach to active and healthy ageing, above the strict medical dimension. AGE believes that the EIP AHA is clearly a great opportunity to mainstream the campaign on age-friendly environments and to gather support for the launch of a Covenant on demographic change.

To ensure the EIP AHA delivers truly for all EU citizens and achieves its goal, it is important not only to support but also to monitor the overall process. The European Commission has aligned many funding opportunities with the objectives of the EIP AHA and will continue to do, notably with Horizon 2020 and the Health for Growth Programme.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 41 or consult the EP legislative file [here](#).



## 5. Create age-friendly labour markets and economy

### **Improve the reconciliation between private and working lives, in particular by proposing a EU Directive on carers' leave for workers with informal care duties**

**Background:** The EU tries to tackle the obstacles which older workers face to remaining in or re-entering employment including pressures to balance their professional lives with caring duties for family members. The Joint Employment Report (JER) reviews the employment situation in the EU and labour market related policies. It encourages Member States to apply the four Employment Guidelines relating to labour market participation, qualifications, education and poverty. The main issues for older people in the JER include work-life balance

**AGE position:** To date insufficient attention has been paid to supporting older informal carers – who are largely women aged 50+ – and AGE welcomes the current reflections going on at EU level on a possible legislative proposal for carers' leave. Such provisions are needed in the context of demographic ageing and cuts in social budgets, where large numbers of older workers are faced with family duties to provide care to elderly parents and young grandchildren, yet nothing is done to help them remain in the labour market.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 30

### **Improve the working conditions for all age groups by supporting a new EU Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health at Work 2014-2020**

**Background:** Since 2002 the EU has fulfilled its political role in the area of Occupational Safety and Health by means of multi-annual Strategies formally endorsed by the

Commission after consultations, and voluntarily implemented by Member States and stakeholders. Two strategies on health and safety at work have been adopted so far, the first in 2002, covering the period until 2006, the second in 2007 for the period until 2012. The 2007-2012 Strategy set an ambitious goal for all Member States: to reduce accidents at work by 25 %. In addition, a number of specific objectives were identified, such as better implementing the EU regulatory framework on occupational safety and health, adaptation of the framework to changes in the workplace, development of coherent national strategies adjusted to the specific context of each Member State and promotion of a preventive culture addressing all parts of society. Results of the evaluation of the 2007-2012 strategy have been published and suggest that a post-2012 framework is needed, as all EU Member States face similar challenges. Despite official call from the EP and a public consultation launched last May 2013, a new EU Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health at Work for the period 2014-2020 has not been published yet.

**AGE position:** AGE considers that an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) framework at EU level is necessary because health and safety at work is such a wide-ranging issue with short and long term effects, affecting the lives of the majority of people living in the EU. Retaining the over 50s at work is becoming increasingly important and the new OSH strategy should identify new risks attributable to the changing economic and social environment and to those associated with new technologies and demographic trends.

AGE considers that there remains scope for improvement in a future strategy, in particular in terms of the integration and coordination with other relevant policy areas and between the various actors involved at the EU level, such as enhanced coordination with DG Health and Consumers. There also continue to be a number of important issues which need to be addressed with regard to workers of all ages including ergonomics, accidents' prevention, occupational diseases as well as specific health and safety concerns related to cognitive and physical changes affecting ageing workers.

For more information on AGE position, please read AGE reply to the European Commission consultation [here](#).

## **Support quality stable jobs for older workers, including older women, and call for action to facilitate transitions between jobs and from work to retirement**

**Background:** To support Member States in their efforts to achieve Europe 2020 Strategy's full employment objectives, the European Employment Strategy (EES) provides a set of measures that support and co-ordinate Member State's employment policies. The EES seeks to create more and better jobs throughout the EU, and to help certain disadvantaged groups such as women, older workers and the long-term unemployed, remain or return in the labour market. In particular, older women face many disadvantages on the labour market impacting on their pension rights and putting them at a higher risk of poverty than men. They also face severe challenges in balancing employment and caring activities.

**AGE position:** With the crisis, the number of older workers who lost their jobs and have been unable to regain employment has grown considerably. AGE believes that we need to facilitate the re-entry of these older workers into the labour market if the EU is to benefit from the skills and experience they hold. Older workers must be given the choice to participate in training opportunities, to continue to work or to phase their retirement, etc. while employers need to be supported to address skills shortages in response to demographic pressures and to launch initiatives that take a broad approach to promoting intergenerational cooperation and solidarity in the workplace.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 29-30

### **Promote the business case for age diversity at work, notably as a tool to fight against both youth and older workers' unemployment**

**Background:** The European Commission has encouraged employers to put diversity management more firmly on their strategic business agendas while also supporting their activities across the EU through numerous actions over the last few years. The EC-funded 'Business Case for Diversity' project aimed at showing that diversity management - whereby employers recognise, value and include women and men of different ages, abilities, ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation - makes good business sense. It constituted a key tool in helping to promote the acceptance, appreciation and integration of diversity within the corporate culture. It focuses on: support for voluntary initiatives; building understanding of what is involved for enterprises; increasing awareness of the business benefits to be gained; coordinating the various diversity initiatives within the EU.

**AGE position:** AGE believes that actions are needed to increase older workers' employment rate. Specific initiatives and incentives should be developed to encourage employers to hire and retain them. It is important to keep older workers active in employment for longer not only because the workplace benefits from the valuable skills and competences they hold but because their continued employment helps generate taxes which are necessary for the long-term sustainability of our pensions, health care and other social services. Building the case for age diversity at work is a strong tool to demonstrate the value of older workers and the key role they play for knowledge transfers to the younger generation, doing so supporting the fight against youth unemployment.

### **Use the knowledge, experience and know-how of older generations by promoting intergenerational learning and exchange at work**

**Background:** Article 3.3 of the Lisbon Treaty states that the Union "shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child." Governments all over the EU are promoting longer working lives to help reduce the demographic pressure on public budgets and support greater solidarity between generations. However, the inclusiveness of the labour market has been increasingly

challenged since the crisis started. Younger and older workers are the first ones to be made redundant in case of restructuration.

**AGE position:** Demographic ageing calls for longer careers for older people but raises the issue of access to employment for younger cohorts, and implications of work careers on pension rights, for instance example for women who carry most often the burden of care responsibilities. How then best reconcile needs and requests of different age groups on the labour market which can be sometimes contradictory. Optimisation of individual experience, knowledge and skills seems to be one of the best solutions. This calls for mixed age teams with complementary skills and intergenerational transmission of know-how. AGE strongly supports intergenerational occupational learning as a key aspect of the development of age-friendly working labour markets and work places. This allows better integration of all generations at work while valuing everyone's experience. Many positive initiatives are running across the EU which need to be replicated.

### **Foster informal and non-formal learning for people of all ages in order to facilitate their active participation in both paid and unpaid work**

**Background:** Organising and funding education and lifelong learning are Member State responsibilities. However the EU supports Member States' action to help them contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy's overall EU economic and social objectives. The Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) is the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training that builds on its predecessor, the "Education and Training 2010" (ET 2010) work programme. The Europe 2020 Strategy acknowledges lifelong learning and skills development as key elements in response to the current economic crisis, to demographic ageing and to the broader economic and social strategy of the European Union. Moreover, The New Skills for New Jobs initiative set out to promote better anticipation of future skills needs, develop better matching between skills and labour market needs and bridge the gap between the worlds of education and work.

**AGE position:** Adult learning provides a means of up-skilling or reskilling those affected by unemployment, restructuring and career transitions. It also makes an important contribution to social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development.

AGE welcomes the EC Communication on "Flagship Initiative on New Skills for New Jobs"'s call for specific priority to be given to the skills upgrading of older workers who are at particular risk of losing their jobs in economic restructuring processes and for targeted approaches to be adopted to help such workers who are potentially more vulnerable. Education and training are a vital means to improving skill levels for workers of all ages who find themselves out of a job. All EU citizens, irrespective of age, should have the opportunity to acquire and develop the mix of knowledge, skills and aptitudes they need to succeed in the labour market. AGE would also support an initiative for targeted efforts to promote basic digital literacy for those with least access to ICT which includes some groups of older people.

AGE calls for support for an adequate budget for the new Erasmus+ programme and to ensure that it will include support to activities in favour of older adult learners.



**6. Involve older persons in all policy and research processes that concern them**

**Support civil dialogue as set out in the Lisbon Treaty (Article 11) as a key principle for governance processes at EU level**

**Background:** Article 11 of the Lisbon Treaty provides a legal basis for civil dialogue and involves the responsibility of all EU institutions, stating that the institutions shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action, and maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society. Moreover, this article introduced the European citizens' initiative, which allows one million EU citizens to participate directly in the development of EU policies, by calling on the European Commission to make a legislative proposal on a specific issue and thus enhance participative democracy. In addition, thanks to article 4.3 of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, persons with disabilities, including older persons who face functional limitations, now have a legal right to be actively involved and consulted in all processes and decisions that affect them.

**AGE position:** AGE welcomes this article as a clear commitment from the EU Member States and institutions to engage in a strong civil dialogue with representative civil society. AGE participates in the implementation of this article by representing the voice of older citizens in EU policy discussions and developments

**Commit with your fellow MEPs to meet annually with civil society organisations in your country to collect their views on all relevant EU dossiers and report on your own actions**

**AGE position:** MEPs are the citizens' representatives at EU level. AGE believes they should therefore be accountable to EU citizens on their activities. One way to do so is to meet regularly with civil society organisations to report on their activities and to exchange views on all relevant EU dossiers. This would help MEP to represent grass root needs, meet citizens' expectations and easily report on their work. This would also help consolidate European democracy and improve citizens' understanding of EU policies and thus support to the EU.

## **Require through the European Semester process that Member States consult civil society organisations when they draft their National Reform Programmes, in particular when economic reforms will impact on social inclusion, pensions and health and long-term care**

**Background:** the involvement of social partners and civil society in the European Semester process has been acknowledged in the Conclusions of the European Council of 24-25 March 2011[1] and in the EP resolution of 26 October 2012 on the European Semester for Economic Policy Coordination: implementation of 2012 priorities. However, these organisations still report a critical lack of consultation at national level when ministries are drafting their National Reform Programmes, underlining either the absence of consultation or symbolic and/or last minute consultations.

**AGE position:** AGE believes that the involvement of social partners and civil society organisations is essential in the European Semester process, as much upstream when drafting the Annual Growth Survey, when defining the National Reform Programmes and downstream when assessing the implementation of the priorities. A social assessment of the impact of the crisis is indeed needed to be able to take adequate measures and the civil society plays a key role by providing feedback about the situation on the ground.

## **Support the use of relevant EU funding instruments to foster older citizens' active participation in community and volunteer activities**

**Background:** the EU has adopted funding programmes to support citizens' participation in the community, such as the Europe for Citizens Programme. The aim of this programme is to bring Europe closer to its citizens and to enable them to participate fully in the European construction. Through this programme, citizens have the opportunity to be involved in transnational exchanges and cooperation activities, contributing to developing a sense of belonging to common European ideals and encouraging the process of European integration.

**AGE position:** AGE strongly supports this Programme and any other funding initiative which support citizens' engagement and dialogue. We believe that ensuring funding for such activities is essential to ensure that they can effectively reach and involve EU citizens on an equal basis. We recommend MEPs to promote such funding instruments when meeting citizens' associations.

## **Use the existing participatory structures at national level such as citizens' councils or other local consultative structures to connect older citizens' groups with their MEPs and other policy-makers**

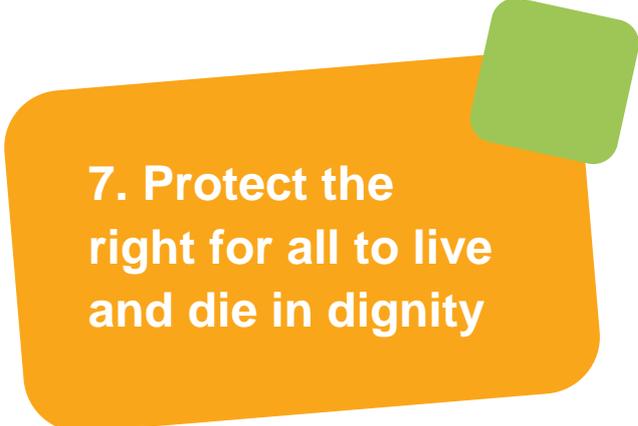
**Background:** participatory structures are well spread in some countries but less in other. They play a key role to ensure that citizens can voice their needs and expectations outside of electoral periods and offer a legitimate frame for debates and policy monitoring. They are also easily-identified structures for policy-makers, such as MEPs, and guarantee the representation of different interests and opinions.

**AGE position:** AGE strongly supports the development of such councils as an efficient way to ensure participatory democracy and citizens' engagement in policy-making processes. AGE members have witnessed successful examples, notably at regional and local levels, which demonstrated valuable contributions to cities' or regions' development. However, awareness about such structures has to be raised to ensure wide and balanced representation, and trainings have to be provided on how to participate in policy-making (e.g. legal issues, specific themes such as pension reforms, lobbying techniques).

### **Ensure genuine and early user involvement in all relevant EU-funded research activities as a criterion for allocation of EU funding**

**Background:** For some years now, user involvement has become a pre-condition for funding opportunities (Ambient and Assisting Living Joint Programme, 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for research...). This has allowed a greater awareness of the benefits of involving users in all research developments. However, we already witnessed a regrettable and detrimental use of simple 'tick-box' exercise, very far from any form of genuine involvement and unable to make both research and users benefit from the solutions developed.

**AGE position:** For AGE, user involvement is essential. Skimp on it makes run the risk that researchers miss the point when developing new goods, services or making policy recommendations. Indeed, transforming users into participants ensures relevance and adequacy of these new initiatives, facilitate the anticipation of ethical issues, prepare commercial take-up, and eventually brings more added-value for everyone. To be genuine, user involvement needs effective planning from the outset with adequate time and financial resources. To be effective, users must not bear any cost and researchers/project managers must ensure that there is an adequate evaluation of user involvement and an effective use of users' feedback.



## **7. Protect the right for all to live and die in dignity**

### **Protect dignity in old age and call for the launch of an initiative to guarantee the right for all to live and die in dignity**

**Background:** As stated in [European Charter of Fundamental rights](#), "the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity". In

addition, article 1 state that 'Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected and protected.' In particular, article 25 of the states that 'The Union recognises and respects the rights of the elderly to lead a life of dignity and independence and to participate in social and cultural life.'

**AGE position:** it is important here to highlight the need to take action to combat elder abuse and promote a dignified end-of-life for all, as well as raising awareness of individual and collective responsibility in accompanying each one of us in the final stages of our lives. In particular, AGE believes that the EU should continue to support research and activities on [palliative and end of life care](#), as well as exchange of practices, so it belongs to the continuum of care in a person's life.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 44.

### **Call on the European Commission to develop an EU-wide strategy to help Member States fight against elder abuse**

**Background:** Elder abuse happens in all EU Member States but still remains a taboo in many of them. According to the World Health Organization definition, elder abuse is considered 'as a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.' Elder abuse can take various forms: psychological (mental, emotional), physical (also medical) financial or material, sexual or discriminatory, or simply reflect intentional or unintentional neglect. Based on AGE Platform Europe repeated [calls](#), the European Commission decided to start working on elder abuse in 2008. Several activities were organised in 2008: a [video](#), a [European Commission conference](#) on Protecting the dignity of older persons - the prevention of elder abuse and neglect. These initiatives have been followed by several other activities such as EU-funded European projects on elder abuse ([Breaking the taboo](#), [IPVOW](#) and [Mind the Gap](#), [AVOW](#), [EUROPEAN](#), [MILCEA](#), [ABUEL](#), [Train Improve Reduce](#), [EUSTACEA](#), [WeDO](#) etc.). Finally, the European Commission continued to organised EU-wide conferences on the topic in [2011](#) and in [2013](#).

**AGE position:** AGE coordinated the Daphne funded project EUSTACEA which developed [an EU Charter of the Rights and responsibilities of older people in need of long-term care and assistance](#), followed by the WeDO project on Wellbeing and Dignity of Older people. Besides, AGE is calling for an EU-wide strategy, which, by building on the results from all these initiatives and encouraging a high-level debate in all EU institutions, would considerably increase their impact and provide a coherent framework of actions to guide EU institutions and EU Members States on taking decisions to measure, prevent and fight elder abuse.

For more information you may read AGE brochure [Active Senior Citizens for Europe](#), p. 44.

## Part 2

# QUESTIONS

for the Hearing of the  
Candidate for the  
European Commission  
Presidency

**Do you agree that the EU  
needs to adopt and implement  
a Strategy on Demographic  
Change to coordinate and  
build synergies between all  
relevant EU policy processes  
and initiatives to ensure that  
Europe 2020 delivers an EU  
for all ages?**

These questions are supported by:





## The European Semester

EU macroeconomic development is very much impacted by the current demographic change Europe's is experiencing. The European Commission issues country specific recommendations to all Member States to ensure that they do their utmost to keep public debt under control. This implies reforming their social protection systems to ensure the long-term sustainability of their pension, health and long-term care systems and to tackle citizens' growing concerns about the sharp increase in socio-economic inequalities in the EU.

- Do you agree that adequacy of social protection systems are as important as sustainability and should be given equal attention in the European Semester process?
- Could the lead of the European Semester be moved from DG ECFIN to the General Secretariat to ensure that social issues have the same weight as macroeconomic issues in the process?
- How do you intend to use the Lisbon Treaty's Article 9 to take initiatives to support Member States in their efforts to guarantee adequate, fair and sustainable national social protection systems?
- What measures do you envisage to support Member States in their efforts to reach Europe 2020 objectives in the field of poverty reduction and increase of employment rate, including for older workers or older people in poverty as well as discriminated and excluded groups such as persons with disabilities?



## Fundamental Rights

EU's approach to the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights has been on an ad hoc and fragmented basis and there is incoherence between how rights are addressed in

EU's internal and external action, which entails important disparities about how EU citizens can access their rights.

Furthermore the Proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (COM(2008) 426) was tabled by President Barroso and is blocked in the Council since 2008.

- Do you agree that the EU should renew its commitment and enhance its accountability to deliver the realisation of the rights of all EU citizens across its programme, policies and legislation in line also with the mainstreaming of the non-discrimination provision in EU Treaties and to improve the EU's capacity to promote and enforce fundamental rights and non-discrimination in its Member States?
- What actions do you intend to take to achieve equality and non-discrimination for all EU citizens in all areas of their lives? Do you commit to take action to achieve the adoption of a strong Equal Treatment directive?



The new European Consumer Agenda aims at boosting confidence in the Single Market. This implies ensuring the protection of all consumers, including the most disadvantaged ones.

- How will you guarantee that all consumers can benefit from a performing EU internal market and enjoy safe and accessible goods and services, including financial services and long-term care services?
- Will you commit to the presentation to the Parliament and Council of the long awaited legislative proposal for a European Accessibility Act?
- Do you plan to improve broadband coverage across Europe to facilitate the scaling-up of e-Health and ICT-based services supporting independent living for older persons and persons with disabilities?
- How do you intend to contribute to the mainstreaming of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities in the Digital Agenda?

The graphic consists of two overlapping rounded rectangles. The larger one is orange and contains the text 'Regional Policy'. The smaller one is green and is positioned in the top right corner of the orange rectangle.

## Regional Policy

Demographic change is a key challenge for most European regions. With more than 350 billion Euros, the reformed Cohesion policy for 2014-2020 is a powerful instrument to support local and regional authorities tackling current and future challenges, such as demographic change. Creating age-friendly environments, i.e. adapting everyday living environment to the needs of Europe's ageing population is the most promising solution to demographic change.

Age-friendly environments help create new jobs in innovative sectors and lower the pressure of old age dependency on the public purse by empowering people to work longer, age in better physical and mental health, remain active in their community as citizens and consumers, live independently at home and enjoy a good quality of life in their old age.

A large group of stakeholders supported by EU funding is currently framing a EU Covenant on Demographic Change to create a sustainable policy framework that will bring together local and regional, national and EU authorities and stakeholders who want to develop and implement smart and innovative solutions to support active and healthy ageing and make age-friendly environments across the EU a reality.

- Since demographic change is identified as a cross-cutting policy objective and as such has lost visibility into the reformed cohesion policy, do you agree that it is the role of the EU to support such a Covenant on Demographic Change and will you make sure it is properly funded by the Operational Programmes?

## Part 3

# QUESTIONS

for the Hearings  
of the candidate  
Commissioners

To be available in September 2014