

Open letter: Beyond tokens, the ageing population deserves an EU strategy on age equality

Brussels, 25 July 2024

Dear President von der Leyen,

On behalf of AGE Platform Europe, the EU's largest network of organisations of and for older persons, please accept our congratulations for having received the confidence of both the European Council and the European Parliament for another mandate.

We have read with interest your political guidelines for the next European Commission. Building on the [AGE Manifesto](#), which we shared with you in May, we support your continued commitment to a Union of Equality and therefore welcome the appointment of a Commissioner for Equality.

We support and call for solidarity with younger and future generations, as all age groups deserve fairness, solidarity and equal rights. While it is laudable to create a commissioner for intergenerational fairness, as pointed out in your guidelines, his or her mandate stays silent about older persons.

We are surprised that older people of today and tomorrow were neither mentioned in your political guidelines, nor in the presentation to the European Parliament. We trust that you will fill this gap and propose initiatives on equality in old age based on the Commission's own conclusions and recommendations of the [Joint Research Centre](#) and the [Fundamental Rights Agency](#), as well as the [World Health Organisation](#). They all focus on the need to address ageism as a key component of policies that reap the benefits of longer lives and foster solidarity between generations.

Notwithstanding the achievements on ageing of your last mandate – the Green Paper on Ageing, the prioritisation of older adults in vaccination strategies during COVID-19 or the rights-based policy on long-term care of the EU Care Strategy – age has remained the only ground of discrimination without an equality strategy.

After hundreds of thousands of older persons were affected by the COVID pandemic and the lack of preparedness for such an emergency, we can no longer delay a comprehensive equality approach.

The EU needs a new vision on ageing, one that moves away from seeing old age as a burden and, instead, celebrates longevity and facilitates the contribution of older people to society. This is critical to ensure that we all, no matter our age, enjoy equal rights as EU citizens.

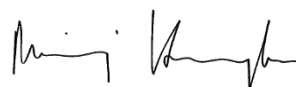
Therefore, we call on you to give an explicit mandate to the Commissioner on Equality to develop, steer and oversee an EU strategy on age equality, in line with the international human rights commitments of the EU and its Member States, the ambition of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, and the UN Decade on Healthy Ageing. The EU can and should lead by example in all these areas.

We wish you every success in your future endeavours at the head of the European Commission and remain at your disposal discuss how we can truly develop a Europe for all ages.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Heidrun Mollenkopf
AGE President



Maciej Kucharczyk
AGE Secretary-General



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