

Advocating for age equality in Europe on the International Day of Older Persons

Report of joint event at the European Parliament, 2 October 2024



On 2 October, AGE Platform Europe and **Ms Idoia Mendía Cueva**, S&D Member of the European Parliament (MEP), were pleased to organise an event at the European Parliament to celebrate the International Day of Older Persons (1 October). Members of the AGE Executive Committee, AGE members, civil society partners and MEPs from several political groups gathered around the table to promote the recommendations set out in the [AGE Manifesto](#) and the [Intergenerational Declaration](#) of AGE and the European Youth Forum, and launch our campaign for a 'Europe for all ages' intergroup. The event was an opportunity to call on the new European Parliament and the European Commission to reaffirm their commitment to ensuring that older people enjoy the same rights and dignity as younger citizens.

Aligning political portfolios with ageing priorities

During the event, **Anthony DeGiovanni**, Vice-President of AGE Platform Europe, reminded the MEPs in the room of the worrying shortcomings with regard to equality and ageing policies in the Commission President's roadmap and in the allocation of portfolios.

The absence of a Commissioner with a full portfolio dedicated solely to equality, as initially announced by the Commission President, left AGE and its members wondering about the future of the Union of Equality. Mr DeGiovanni pointed out to MEPs the worrying absence of any mention of age discrimination among the grounds of discrimination covered by the mission statement of the candidate for equality, Ms Hadja Lahbib.

Mr DeGiovanni also welcomed the appointment of a Commissioner for Intergenerational Equity. However, he stressed that although his remit includes intergenerational dialogue, there is no other reference to older people in his mission letter. The MEPs present were informed and encouraged to question the missions of Ms Hadja Lahbib and Mr Glenn Micallef during the forthcoming hearings.

MEPs call for structural changes in ageing policies

The opening remarks by **MEPs Marcos Ros**, on behalf of Ms Idoia Mendía, and **Marina Kaljurand** placed particular emphasis on the need to change the discourse on ageing. We need to take a lifelong approach to ageing, talk about the different ways in which people age, and understand older people as individuals who face multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination, but whose potential also needs to be enhanced. As they pointed out, there is a real urgency to rethink our model and to include ageing within our policies, from the recognition of care as a fundamental right to the adoption of minimum social benefits to address the disparity between the different pension systems across Europe. In their speeches, both MEPs called for unified efforts from the new Commission.

Age equality was given pride of place in **MEP Marc Angel**'s presentation, who welcomed the presence of all generations around the table. As he explained to the audience, calling for age equality is not about granting extra rights, but about ensuring that everyone is treated equally. He welcomed the proposal of an Age Equality Strategy and stressed the need to question Ms Lahbib and Mr Micallef and encourage them to speak out on the issue of ageing and age equality. Finally, Mr Angel condemned the fact that the horizontal anti-

discrimination directive had been blocked for years and the need to make it a priority.

The under-representation of marginalised groups, including people with disabilities and older people, in European policymaking was condemned by **MEP Katrin Langensiepen**. Ms Langensiepen drew the audiences' attention to the need for a Commissioner with sole responsibility for equality, not as a symbolic role, but with real power to drive forward meaningful anti-discrimination legislation in all areas, including ageing.

MEP Fernando Barrena welcomes the fact that care policies have been better addressed and have gained consensus in recent years, but regrets that this is not the case in all areas. He stressed the need to combat age discrimination more effectively in all areas. **MEP Gordan Bosanac** also insisted on a change of discourse, condemning European speeches that spread concerns about Europe's ageing. Above all, he insisted that an ageing Europe is the positive result of a population that manages to live longer and in better health. **MEP Loucas Furlas**, recalled the invaluable contribution made by older people to society and the need for European policies to guarantee their quality of life, their inclusion and their active participation in society and the labour market.

With the support of MEPs such as **Elena Kountoura**, who defends breast cancer survivors and wished to better address violence against older people, the event highlighted a growing movement within the Parliament in favour of structural change. All of the MEPs present agreed on the need to work together to develop a new vision of ageing and confirmed their interest in a 'Europe for all ages' intergroup within the Parliament.

Intergenerational solidarity in the face of common challenges

The importance of intergenerational solidarity in tackling Europe's most pressing challenges was a central theme of the discussions. AGE Platform Europe and the European Youth Forum draw up together [the Intergenerational Declaration](#) in the context of the EU-funded [MEET Project](#), underlining the importance of dialogue, understanding and connection between generations.

Ms Chloë Cauchi, representative of the European Youth Forum, called for an end to age discrimination in all areas, stressing that intergenerational equity concerns all generations, including young people who will one day be old themselves. She called for a collective approach, particularly in areas such as housing, which affect young and old alike.

Ms Marine Luc, Project and Membership Officer at AGE, also stressed that ageism has an impact on young and old alike and encouraged efforts to establish intergenerational dialogue in contexts such as climate change and technological change. The voices of younger and older generations must unite to achieve meaningful progress.

In this respect, **MEP Costas Mavrides**, rapporteur for the European Year of Skills, pointed out that the older generations are both the foundation of Europe's past and the driving force behind its present, while the younger generations represent the future. Exchanges and solidarity between the generations are more than important if we are to meet Europe's challenges.

The absence of supportive policies in one area has an impact on all generations. In the labour market, when older workers are unable to find work because of ageism, it is often up to the younger generation to abandon their studies and enter the labour market to support their relatives financially. As far as care strategies are concerned, **Ms Claire Champeix**, from Eurocarers, highlighted the slow pace of reforms, which has an impact on both the older and younger people. Without a policy to provide health services, carers young and old will be affected, undermining the EU's social cohesion promise that all citizens, regardless of age, have equal opportunities to participate in society.

Toward a Europe for All Ages

The celebration of the International Day of Older Persons is a powerful reminder of the need to defend older people's rights, to value their contributions and to ensure that Europe remains a society where all generations can flourish together.

The creation of a European Parliament intergroup dedicated to a Europe for all ages was one of the main themes of the event. This intergroup, supported by MEPs from various political groups and civil society networks, will aim to develop policies that protect the rights of older people while promoting intergenerational solidarity. The participating MEPs called for a rapid mobilisation and collection of signatures to form this intergroup.

More information:

- The AGE Manifesto and intergroup campaign has its own blog with regular updates: <https://www.age-manifesto.eu>
- [Call for an intergroup “Europe for all ages”](#)
- [AGE Manifesto](#)
 - [Manifesto explainer “Age Equality”](#)
 - [Manifesto explainer “Active ageing and participation”](#)
 - [Manifesto explainer “Autonomy and well-being”](#)
- [AGE-European Youth Forum Intergenerational Declaration](#)

If you are an MEP and wish to support ‘A Europe for all ages” intergroup, please, write to Philippe Seidel (philippe.seidel@age-platform.eu) and Sarah Loriato (sarah.loriato@age-patform.eu)



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