



Brussels, 10 July 2019

**Open letter to the candidate for the President of the EU Commission:
Please commit to a Europe for all ages!**

Dear Dr von der Leyen,

We congratulate you for being nominated candidate to the post of President of the European Commission.

As the EU's largest network of organisations of and for older people, we and our members are promoting the European values of democracy and human rights, including non-discrimination, and the strong attachment to a European integration that warranted freedom, security and prosperity in Europe. As a minister for defence, you know how this model is challenged from the point of view of security, and as a former minister for families, senior citizens, women and youth you have experienced how citizens are concerned about what directly affects their lives. Profound shifts are calling for urgent action on European level to preserve this way of life: they are linked to climate change and to demographic change. EU governments have sensed these urgencies by adopting the [Sibiu Declaration](#) this spring and calling in particular **to protect our way of life, democracy and the rule of law and to uphold the principle of fairness**. In [its Strategic Guidelines for 2019-2024](#), the European Council set the aim of a **'rights and equal opportunities for all'**.

At our General Assembly, gathered right after the European elections 2019, our member have adopted [a Final Declaration](#) raising the concern of increasing polarisation in European societies, including between young and old. However, AGE is convinced that all age groups share common concerns: **fighting against poverty and unemployment, ensuring adequate income and support for all, guaranteeing access to education for every child and life-long learning opportunities regardless of age, introducing fair taxation, and ensuring a sustainable ecological transition**. AGE members called for **a new intergenerational contract to support social justice for all generations**.

Challenges of generations are intertwined: our socio-economic status and identity impact us throughout our lives. Inequalities in younger age impact how people age, lack of quality and affordable long-term care services put the burden of care on younger generations. Women especially, but also older migrants or persons with disabilities are particularly affected by the cumulation of disadvantages in many people's older age. Therefore, AGE members called for a society for all ages, which can be built through cooperation across generations

Therefore, we urge you to include the following priorities in your presentation to the European Parliament on Tuesday 16 July before the vote on your election:

- Strengthening the legal framework for non-discrimination. We support a number of civil society organisations, including the European Disability Forum, the European Network against Racism, the European Women's Lobby and ILGA Europe calling for **equal and strong legal protection for everyone on all the grounds of discrimination included in Article 19 of the EU Treaty and to include closing the gap in legal protection against discrimination in the next five-year programme of the European Commission**.





- Building a culture of civil dialogue. As members of Social Platform, we believe that society's challenges can only be tackled through cooperation of all groups of society in the definition, adoption, implementation and evaluation of policies. **We urge you to commit to real and effective dialogue with civil society as well as with social partners as a permanent method for your policy-making.**
- Building an environmentally and socially sustainable future. EU governments, the European Parliament and the European Commission have adopted the European Pillar of Social Rights as a roadmap for social governance. Meanwhile, the UN Sustainable Development Goals commit Europe in its internal and external policies towards sustainability and social inclusion. **We urge you to commit to the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals, and to a European Commission which actively pursues the implementation of these goals.**
- Building intergenerational dialogue and cooperation. The EU has a key role to play to foster common understanding of policy priorities across generations. Through the Erasmus Programme, the EU can promote intergenerational exchanges. European funds can contribute to quality social services for all generations and the building of the capacity of democratic civil society to participate in policy-making. The European Day of Solidarity between Generations on 29 April is a perfect occasion to promote dialogue between older and younger citizens. **We urge you to fully make use of the potential of intergenerational dialogue by actively consulting all generations in the formulation of your future policies.**

To implement these key points, AGE has adopted and promoted its [AGE manifesto for the European elections 2019](#), which we hope can inspire you in drawing up your priorities and commitments for the five years to come.

We call on you to do your utmost to build a collective project for EU integration and identity, based on shared values that bring EU citizens together: social progress, inclusion and solidarity across generations and countries.

Yours faithfully,

Anne-Sophie Parent

AGE Secretary-General

