



Brussels, 14 November 2017

## **AGE Platform Europe response to WHO's consultation on its 13<sup>th</sup> general programme of work (GPW13)**

As highlighted by the World Health Organization (WHO) in its World population Ageing Report 2015 (p.2), *“Globally, the number of older persons is growing faster than the numbers of people in any other age group. As a result, the share of older persons in the total population is increasing virtually everywhere.*

*Between 2015 and 2030, the number of people in the world aged 60 years or over is projected to grow by 56 per cent, from 901 million to 1.4 billion, and by 2050, the global population of older persons is projected to more than double its size in 2015, reaching nearly 2.1 billion.*

*Globally, the number of people aged 80 years or over, the “oldest-old” persons, is growing even faster than the number of older persons overall. Projections indicate that in 2050 the oldest-old will number 434 million, having more than tripled in number since 2015, when there were 125 million people over age 80. The proportion of the world's older persons who are aged 80 years or over is projected to rise from 14 per cent in 2015 to more than 20 per cent in 2050.”*

WHO is aware that older people account for a much greater proportion of the global burden of disease and of need for health care than do other age groups and over the past decade, has begun to address this key global challenge.

Yet the proposed WHO 13th General Programme of Work makes absolutely no reference to older persons.

Given the rapid ageing of the population in all regions, the lack of dedicated action to ensure that older persons' equal right to access healthcare is hard to understand and appears as a blatant example of age discrimination in full contradiction with WHO Global campaign to combat ageism launched in 2016. If the proposed Programme is approved as it stands, it will considerably diminish WHO's global authority and send the wrong message to that WHO is championing structural ageism.

We therefore urge WHO to rectify this striking oversight and to include in its proposed GPW13 concrete actions to support the health of older people and address the challenges of population ageing, as recommended in WHO Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health adopted in May 2016 by the World Health Assembly. Such actions should focus on:

- Prevention and better management of chronic conditions, particularly non-communicable diseases;



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- Promotion of physical activity and good nutrition including in old and very old age to improve health and well-being of older persons;
- Supportive environments to ensure that older persons with declining capacities can live lives of dignity and continued personal growth.

As mentioned in the [WHO 69<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly Report A69/17](#), *“These actions can be viewed within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, which provide a foundation for multi-country and international action from 2015 to 2030, including Goal 3: “To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages through universal health coverage including financial risk protection”.*

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