



PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 22 November 2017

European Semester and European Pillar of Social Rights

Make social rights a reality: mainstream older people's concerns into the European Semester!

While releasing [its assessment of the European Semester 2017](#), AGE calls for an active application of the principles in the European Pillar of Social Rights, adopted on 17 November in Gothenburg, in the next Semester cycle, starting with the Annual Growth Survey 2018.

*'While older people in Europe still face **high numbers of inactivity, rising poverty rates among older women and the oldest old, stagnating - or decreasing - pension levels and the lack of quality long-term care services**, a strategy to reduce these shortcomings is needed more than ever',* says Anne-Sophie Parent, Secretary-General of AGE. *'The proclamation of a number of rights in the pillar is a major step forward. In particular the rights to pension and to adequate resources that ensure living in dignity in old age, as well as the rights to long-term care, to life-long learning and active employment support, to access to essential services and to universal health care are essential to address the needs of the growing population of older people in Europe. **After the adoption of the European Pillar of Social Rights, these principles should now be systematically applied – especially in the European Semester.**'*

In this call, AGE supports [the letter of the European Anti-Poverty Network to Commission President Juncker](#), which highlights the need to progress towards binding Social Pillar principles, backed by EU funding, for effective implementation, and suggests, as a first step, a transformed European Semester.

In its assessment, **AGE welcomes many of the positive changes** that have taken place in the European Semester. The EU's process of coordination of economic and fiscal policies is indeed moving away from a sole focus on fiscal deficits to take into account more social considerations. Increasingly, recommendations are placed where social investment can improve not only the functioning of the economy, but of societies as a whole: there is more focus on life-long learning and work-life balance, including for carers, some more considerations for the adequacy of pensions and access to universal health care.

However, important domains are still left out of the Semester: employment services have not the necessary tools and means to support older jobseekers, age discrimination still inhibits many older people to find a job or to stay in their employment. Especially older women feel the triple burden of the high gender pension gap, the unmet social care needs which they have to provide informally and the high risk of poverty at very old age. Investments into quality long-term care, both home-based and in person-centred residential care settings are insufficient to face the upcoming needs for long-term care. And while the **Silver Economy** has a high potential for growth and jobs in Europe, essential aspects such as the accessibility of all goods and services, the access to services in rural and urban areas, the digital gap and the issues of loneliness and social isolation are largely ignored in the European Semester.

In AGE's assessment, **member organisations from seven member states** – Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands and Spain – have also highlighted the situation in their own member states. They provide a thorough assessment of the priorities of older people in these countries.

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Useful links:

- AGE Position on the European Semester 2017: http://www.age-platform.eu/sites/default/files/AGE_position_on_the_EU_Semester_2017.pdf
- EAPN Letter to President Juncker: Annual Growth Survey 2018: Make progress on poverty and a European Social Standards Union!: <http://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/EAPN-2017-EAPN-letter-Juncker-AGS2018-FINAL-2655.pdf>

Note to the editor

About AGE Platform Europe:



AGE is a European network of organisations of and for people aged 50+ aiming to voice and promote the interests of the 190 million citizens aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness of the issues that concern them most. www.age-platform.eu

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AGE policy work is co-funded by the **Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme** of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of AGE Platform Europe and ENNHRI and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.