Oral statement by the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Senioren-Organisationen

General statements, Organisational Meeting of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Older Persons, 18 to 20 February 2026

Speaker: Ina Voelcker

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

BAGSO aligns itself with the statements made by GAROP and AGE Platform Europe, both of which we are a proud member.

We join others in saying that this organisational meeting is a historic milestone, not only for those already in older age, but for every person who aspires to grow old with dignity. The forthcoming legally binding instrument is our collective opportunity to transform the world into one where we can age with rights and free from discrimination.

For this convention to truly reflect the diverse realities of older people worldwide, meaningful participation is non-negotiable. Older persons and their representative organisations should be included in every aspect of this group's work: as panellists, in working groups, and with dedicated speaking time. Governments should financially support the participation of rights holders to ensure the lived experience of older persons is part of the drafting process. There are good examples from previous processes that we can draw on.

Further, our right to self-organise as civil society must be recognised. As mentioned by others, timely access to information is essential, enabling us to consult our constituencies at all levels—local, national, regional, and global. As an association uniting over 120 member organisations across Germany, we stand ready to engage with our members through well-established processes, to be able to contribute meaningfully to the drafting.

We are eager to collaborate with Member States, older persons, like-minded NGOs, NHRIs and other stakeholders. Together, we can ensure this process is led by the voices of those most concerned: older persons themselves.

Thank you for your attention, Mr. Chair.

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BAGSO – The voice of older people

BAGSO, the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations, represents the interests of older generations in Germany. It stands up for active, healthy and self-determined ageing in social security. BAGSO is an umbrella organisation of more than 120 civil society organisations that are run by or work for older people. In a colourful and diverse society, BAGSO promotes a differentiated image of old age. This includes both the various opportunities arising from longer lives as well as times of vulnerability and the need for care. BAGSO calls on politicians, society and businesses to offer conditions that allow for a good and dignified life in older age – in Germany, Europe and worldwide.

At the United Nations, BAGSO is actively involved in the development of a UN Convention for Older People. BAGSO is a member of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP), an international alliance of over 400 civil society organisations that advocates for the rights of older people, and of AGE Platform Europe, the largest European network of NGOs for and of older persons. BAGSO's Secretariat for International Policy on Ageing provides information on current international developments in ageing policy and contributes the interests of civil society to international processes.