Video statement by the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Senioren-Organisationen

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

Speaker: Dr Heidrun Mollekopf

I speak as a member of the board of BAGSO, the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations, and for myself as an older woman.

For a long time, we have been campaigning for a legally, binding instrument that safeguards the rights of older people worldwide.

Now the time has finally come: an intergovernmental working group is convening for its first meeting, equipped with a mandate to develop such an instrument. We would like to thank everyone who has worked towards this goal at various levels over the past years.

The course is now being set for further work. Regarding the organisation, we align with the recommendations of GAROP and AGE Platform Europe.

In terms of content, the focus must now be on more than just closing long-standing gaps in international legislation:

It is essential to take the gender perspective into account and to avoid ageism in language and legislation.

It is also urgent to cover areas that have only recently become controversial, such as the increasing digitalisation of all areas of private and public life and the intensification of climate change.

Finally, the increasing number of armed conflicts around the world require that the various barriers and obstacles faced by older people are reliably considered.

Older people and their representatives must be involved in all these issues so that their experiences and needs can be incorporated into the wording of the text.

I wish the working group every success in elaborating the new legally binding instrument on the promotion and protection of the human rights of older people.

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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 around ageing and older people and contributes the interests of civil society to international processes.