



## **Joint Statement by AGE Platform Europe & BAGSO**

### **United Nations' General Assembly Open-Ended Working Group for the purpose of strengthening the protection of human rights of older persons**

*Speaker: Dr Heidrun Mollenkopf*

#### **Item 6. Social inclusion**

**5 April 2023**

Excellencies, Mr Moderator,

I am speaking on behalf of AGE Platform Europe and BAGSO, the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations.

Social inclusion is cornerstone for wellbeing and health – something everybody knows from her or his daily life. Feeling excluded and being unable to participate directly impacts on how we feel, sometimes simply leading to feeling disappointed or offended for limited time, but also causing long-lasting loneliness and depression, as we just heard. Despite the unquestionable importance of social inclusion and its recognition in the international human rights framework, the right to equal participation is often disrespected regarding older persons. There is plenty of evidence that age discrimination is deeply rooted in society, in all areas of life, as for

instance, in the work environment and in leisure and volunteering activities. This concerns especially persons who are marginalised because of gender, disability, ethnicity, or other reasons, and those experiencing multiple intersecting discrimination. However, even public figures in their 60s and 70s share their experiences as older professionals who have to fight against ageism, as reported in one of Germany's most important news magazines last week ("Der Spiegel").

When I am looking around this room, I am asking myself how many of you realise that you as well will be affected when you will reach older age. Astonishingly, the law permits most of this.

As German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations, we hear concerns especially in the context of the increasing digitalisation of all areas of life. We therefore advocate for the inclusion of "age" as characteristic in article 3 on equality before law of the German Basic Law. Having adequate measures at national level is important to us. At the same time, we are convinced that a Convention as an international legally binding instrument would empower us, and coming generations of older people worldwide, in asserting our human rights.

A convention would impose a duty of ensuring older persons participate wherever decisions are made and create space for rights holders to participate in public affairs and demand their rights. A new treaty would further include a duty for data collection and facilitate access to justice and remedy in case of violation.

Against this background, I would like to ask the panellists how these elements could be included in a new treaty and how they would expand the reach of human rights law so that we can all age with rights.

Thank you!

Listen to the statement on UN WebTV:

<https://media.un.org/en/asset/k14/k14ra1lqaf?kalturaStartTime=7150>

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