

**AGE Platform Europe Strategy 2018-2020**  
**Ex Co proposal to the Council for discussion on 17/06/2016**

**Why is the Executive Committee proposing to start developing AGE next triennial strategy?**

- AGE current triennial strategy covers 2015-2016-2017. Activities under the current strategy are funded under the EU Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme and a new call will be launched by the European Commission in 2017 for triennial strategic partnerships with DG Justice for the period 2018-2019-2020. It is important to allow AGE members enough time to discuss and finalise the Strategy they want for AGE, on time for the next REC triennial funding cycle.
- The external global and EU contexts AGE is trying to influence have changed radically, in particular since 2008 with the on-going crisis and economic slowdown, the increasing demographic “pressure”, changes in the political landscape, refugee’s crisis, etc. All these developments have significant consequences for European societies and AGE future strategy needs to reflect the increasing difficulties older people to live in dignity.
- At UN level there are new developments regarding a potential UN Convention on the Rights of Older people (see the annexed document prepared by Nena) and in 2017 there will be the review of the implementation of the 2002 UN Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging (MIPAA).
- At EU level, little attention has been paid in recent years to the rights of older people and the Equal Treatment Directive is still blocked at Council.
- AGE next triennial strategy should thus clarify what AGE members want AGE to focus on and work with to achieve influence at UN level and EU level. It should also cover which feedback from AGE the members prefer.
- AGE internal context has changed as well. 2016 marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of AGE Platform Europe: AGE membership has evolved since it was established in 2001 and therefore we must constantly adjust to meet members’ expectations toward AGE.

1. **What should AGE triennial Strategy cover?**

- AGE next triennial strategy should start from a **dream scenario**: what do we want AGE to achieve/promote in the coming years
- Clear **work priorities and objectives** for the coming 3 years in line with AGE vision and the EU, UN, CoE contexts
- A **realistic timeframe** for all work priorities/objectives

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- A clear and **realistic financial and human resources plan** to support AGE activities in 2018-2020 with defined targets for membership contributions, EU funding for AGE policy work, external funding.
- A **communication plan** to help recruit new members, ensure that members understand the importance of AGE work and can use it at national level, optimal use of social media, printed material, translation
- An **organizational plan** to improve AGE governance, strengthen members' involvement and influence in AGE, develop a supportive staff policy for the Secretariat, etc.
- A **mapping of AGE privileged stakeholders**: members, EU institutions, UN institutions, national, regional and local authorities, research centres and universities, other NGOs, corporate actors, etc.
- **Clear and inclusive working methods** adapted to each work priority/objective to involve members in AGE governance, collect members' input, develop positions, raise awareness of AGE positions, build AGE members' capacity to contribute to relevant EU and UN debates, develop partnership with relevant stakeholders, etc.
- A **clear evaluation process** to assess every year AGE achievements against its triennial strategic objectives and help fine tune the annual work plans.

### How to proceed to develop AGE next triennial strategy?

- All interested Full and Associate Members should be encouraged to nominate key persons to join the "strategy working group" (level of expertise at managerial level).
- The strategy working group will be asked to contribute virtually to the development of AGE next triennial Strategy based on questionnaires and email exchanges managed by AGE secretariat.
- A small drafting group will set up by the Ex Co to help draft the Strategy. This group will include around 7-9 persons including an AGE Vice-President and Secretary General. The drafting group will work mainly virtually but may meet physically once or twice if needed.
- The leading team (AGE Vice-President and Secretary General) should ensure that the drafting group is informed about the evolving UN and EU contexts and takes on board input collected from strategy working group and key external partners, to ensure that AGE will work according to a strategy that builds on all demands, a changing world, EU's relevant work priorities, the financial challenges, sponsorships and current membership's expectations and needs.
- Progress reports on work produced by the drafting group, should be presented at every AGE statutory meeting (Ex Co, Council and GA) during the development phase.
- A draft Strategy should be ready by April 2017. The proposed Strategy will then be submitted to the Council in May 2017 and to the General Assembly for final approval in June 2017, on time to be used as guiding framework for the application for funding under the next Rights, Equality Citizenship call for applications for triennial operating grants (call expected in July/September 2017).

## 2. Getting started

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The Executive Committee is proposing that on 17 June 2016 the Council should decide whether they support the Executive Committee's proposal to:

- Launch the process to develop AGE triennial Strategy for 2018-2020 as proposed above;
- Set up a Strategic working group, open to all Full and Associate members interested in providing input for AGE future Strategy 2018-2020. The group will work between June 2016 and June 2017.
- Mandate AGE Ex Co to set up a small drafting group with a few individuals representing AGE membership diversity who will work under the leadership of one of AGE Vice-Presidents and Secretary General.

## **Annex – Update on AGE work on the rights of older people**

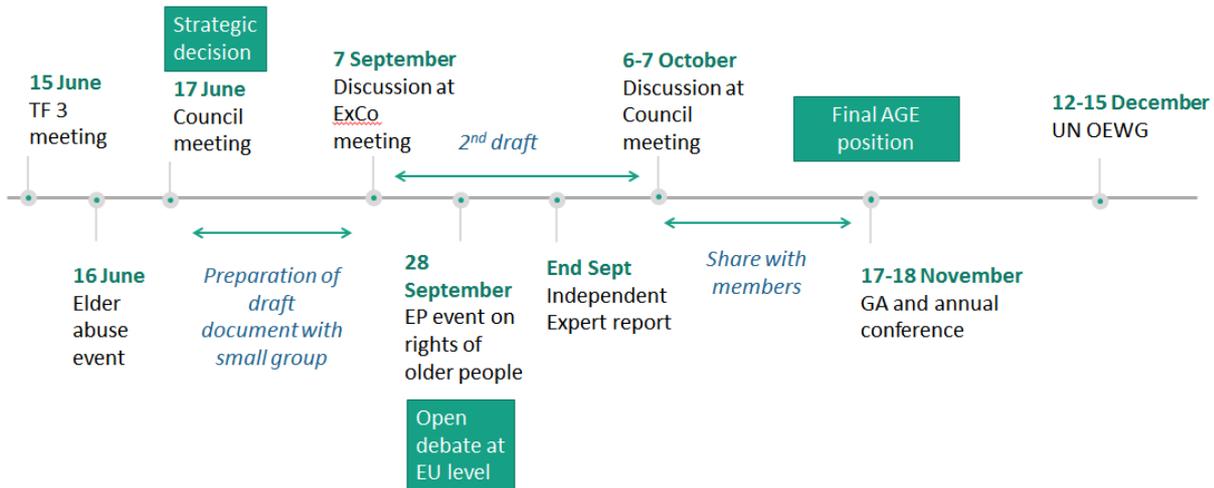
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia hosted an international conference to discuss ways to effectively promote and protect the rights of older persons. The '*Ageing: Rights for Empowerment*' conference took place in Brdo, Slovenia, on 11-12 April 2016. Gathering representatives of States, regional and international organisations, experts as well as civil society, the conference aimed at discussing the current state of protection of the rights of older people as well as possible future action to improve the existing policy and legal framework. The meeting took stock of the existing normative framework and provided an opportunity to discuss rights-based solutions outside the frame of the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG).

**Broad participation by EU governments:** 13 EU Member states participated with delegations from their Ministries, including Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK. In addition, France, Italy and the Netherlands were represented by diplomats. This is the first time that so many high-level representatives from EU states were involved in discussing the rights of older people and showcased an increasing understanding on the need to improve the protection of older people's rights using the available mechanisms but also on the potential of a new UN Convention. The EU was also represented by DG Justice.

### **Outcomes:**

- Participants agreed that we need to have a more 'substantive discussion' on what are the issues faced by older people and which of these issues are not adequately covered by the existing national and international legislation, in order to contribute to the debate beyond rhetoric and insistence on hard points on whether there should be a UN convention. They underlined that it is almost impossible to agree or disagree on the added value of a new convention without knowing which are the issues at stake.
- It also became clear that EU governments are not getting enough political pressure from their own populations to encourage a more active participation in the OEWG and possibly a change in their position.
- The Independent Expert's report, which will be published in September 2016, will contribute to this type of 'substantive discussion', as it will reveal some of the gaps in the protection of human rights of older people. Civil society and Member States should take into account this report to prepare their contribution to the OEWG, which will take place in December 2016 but also to have a debate at national level.
- Germany might organise a similar event in autumn 2016 in preparation of the OEWG.

**Next steps for AGE:**



- The meeting of the Task Force on Human Rights (15/06) and AGE event on elder abuse (16/06) will be used to start discussing the main challenges of older people and the gaps in existing legislation
- On the occasion of AGE June Council meeting (17/06) a small group of members will be formed to elaborate (during the summer and possibly during a meeting back-to-back with the ExCo meeting on 7 September) a list of the main issues for older people and how far these are protected under national and EU/ UN/CoE law.
- On 28 September AGE will co-organise an EP event discussing the rights of older people and the potential added value of a new UN convention
- The draft document will be presented on 6-7 October to AGE Council for a broader debate
- Based on the feedback gathered and the conclusions of the UN Independent Expert a revised version of AGE document will be prepared and will be shared with all AGE members, task forces and other key organisations, such as Helpage International
- The document will be adopted by AGE General Assembly in November 2016 and will be then be submitted to the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing in December 2016. It will also inform AGE future work in this area.

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**All Council members are asked to reflect on the following questions for the elaboration of AGE position:**

- What do you think are the main practical and policy issues faced by older people in your country?
- Do you think that the existing laws and policies in your country and the EU/UN/CoE level adequately protect older people? If not, how should the existing legal framework be revised to provide better protection? What elements should be taken into account?

*Example:*

Issue	Legislation	Principles
Age limits in several areas of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Several EU countries do not offer protection beyond employment.</li><li>- The draft horizontal EU Equal treatment directive is problematic as it includes too many exceptions on age discrimination, whilst the EU is not moving forward with its adoption.</li><li>- Under existing international law (UN, Council of Europe) age discrimination can be justified and it remains unclear when age limits and age-based distinctions can be accepted</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- equality in all ages to become the norm, age-based differences only to be accepted when relevant and justified</li><li>- instead of age limits adopt a more flexible age-neutral approach</li></ul>

**For more information on the state-of-play of the legislation you may wish to refer to AGE self-advocacy handbook at: <http://publications.age-platform.eu/>**