



The European Federation of Older Persons

Paris Declaration of EURAG

The European Federation of Older Persons, EURAG, is the oldest European non-governmental organisation of and for older persons – created in 1962 by pioneers of so-called “work with the aged” from various European countries. It is a non-profit, non-religious organisation independent of any political parties or economic interest bodies. Presently, it has individual and institutional members in 28 European countries and has, since a long time, consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

In October 2025, the European Federation of Older Persons organised a conference in Paris titled:
“Aiming at Better Living Conditions in Older Age”.

In five thematic working groups, participants from many European countries explored important issues – problems and opportunities - of paramount importance for older persons in European society – in particular:

- Job chances and problems for older persons from 50 year onwards
- New life perspectives for older persons after retirement
- Housing of older persons and the need of innovative solutions
- Age discrimination and digital exclusion of older persons
- The role of artificial intelligence in the life of older persons

This declaration resumes main general findings – conclusions and recommendations – of the trans-national debates in the working groups enriched by most significant input from specific local and national experiences, reflections on difficulties and new perspectives during the process of ageing and concepts on how the quality of life of older persons can be improved.

It is perfectly known that the demographic bracket of older persons of 60 plus in European society is growing disproportionately fast during the last decades – due to enormous medical progress, better food security, generally improved socio-economic living conditions as well as scientific and technological advances, all together leading to increased perspectives of longevity, while birth rates have been continuously falling. These developments have created new societal features and a number of unprecedented challenges in various areas, like labour markets, educational setups, social security systems, political dynamics, communication networks etc., just to mention the most significant ones.

However, it must be stated that societal decision-making processes have unfortunately not been ready and able to keep up neither with the speed nor with the content of these remarkable changes and their dramatic consequences for individuals and specific groups in European society. Politicians, administrative actors, economic managers, service providers, cultural creators, spiritual thinkers and civil society leaders are still in a difficult, time consuming and energy demanding learning process with many unfortunate steps of “try and error” experiences.

EURAG's mission and objective is to defend the full enjoyment of all the fundamental rights of older persons and to promote their quality of life in society in all social, economic and cultural aspects, advocating, in particular, the maintenance of an independent, self-determined life and strengthening their position and integration in society by the enhancement of their participation in processes determining their living conditions.

In practice, this means that it is EURAG's purpose to explain to decision makers in all areas of life what ageing is all about, how the attitudes of society restrict the fundamental rights of older persons, which difficulties and barriers older persons encounter when they age, what the specific needs and preferences older persons may have – and what the different actors in various fields of human existence can and should do to improve older persons' living situation.

But it is equally important to make decision-makers fully aware and respect of what today's older persons have contributed to society during their whole working life, through their achievements, by their inventions and problem solutions, through their knowledge and potentials accumulated by decades of experience, by their care work and their voluntary activities for the benefit of society at large, their creation of democracy, just to mention some important aspects of their precious role in the development of today's quality of European society.

From the multifaceted results of the thematic working groups of the EURAG Conference in Paris, the following selected conclusions have to be presented to the attention of decision-makers – and not only politicians – in society at local, regional, national and European levels:

One: To start with, it is very important to clearly understand and take into account that “older persons” or “seniors” are not at all a homogeneous group. Quite to the contrary, they are extremely diversified not only by the continuum of age from 60 to over 100 years, modulated by their individual true biological physical and mental age, but also by their various origins, their life experiences and acquired capacities, their enjoyments and their endured sufferings, their state of health, their education and their economic situation.

Two: These individual backgrounds and conditions determine decisively their understanding of society, their values, attitudes and behaviour in all areas of life, their particular needs and preferences, their specific capacities to share, exchange and cooperate, their knowledge and ability to decide responsibly for themselves and to communicate with others. The respect of these individual elements of the ageing person proves the quality of society.

Three: This all means for policy makers that they have to always take into consideration in their decisions the diversity of older persons and fully recognise the principle that “one size cannot fit all”. Policies, strategies, programmes and services for older persons must be carefully adapted to the particular needs, preferences and capacities of particular sub-groups of older persons – as it is the case in medical treatments and the prescription of medication.

Four: It is evident that, in general, ageing persons may need increasingly support and care, be it by public institutions and services or by private assistance and personal help. However, one principle should always prevail: Never restrict the individual right of independence and self-determination in an unduly manner but recognise and use the capacities of the individual as much as possible and acceptable for the older person.

Five: A rather unfortunate and despicable attitude of European society towards older persons must be corrected by all means – and this is their disregard, their discrimination and often ensuing exclusion. The phenomenon is based on a totally wrong and unreflective concept on ageing which stipulates that

older persons are, in general, frail, exhausted, forgetful, unable to cope with life problems, and constitute a serious structural as well as too heavy financial burden for society.

Six: There are two corrective arguments against this incriminating assumption: One is that science has proved that healthy mental and physical ageing is perfectly possible, if all societal conditions and attitudes are right and supportive. Secondly, the overwhelming part of older persons has itself built up the health and social security systems by their own work and contributions and has thus the well-founded right to benefit from the advantages of the welfare state once they are on their well-deserved retirement.

Seven: It is a false assumption that ageing persons generally yearn to go on retirement as soon as possible. Certainly, there are jobs which use a person – physically or emotionally - to a point where it becomes too hard and even dangerous to continue. But a great part of the working population would be willing and interested to be active beyond the legal retirement age – under the condition that the arrangement of the working situation is all right for them and also financially beneficial. State and the employers together with the workers representations have the responsibility to negotiate and offer appropriate arrangements.

Eight: One of the most important circumstances for safe and happy ageing is an adequate living place. A large majority of older persons clearly prefer to age “at home” – and not in an older persons’ institution nor in the family. But the conditions which allow this choice so are seldom appropriate. Rent might be too high, services not sufficiently available, too many physical obstacles and social connection points difficult to reach. Public authorities have the responsibility to ensure that every ageing person can afford to enjoy an adequate place where to live decently – with all the support needed. A range of ambulant services, interactive communication devices, advanced robotic systems and alike support possibilities can be the basis of innovative housing solutions.

Nine: It is also a regrettable prejudice that older persons cannot properly handle advanced digital devices and processes like computers, iPhones, electronic banking and alike. Scientific research and practice have clearly shown that the brain of older persons does not necessarily lose capacities and its adaptation to new challenges if properly trained and used. Lifelong learning is not a myth but an opportunity and even a necessity. However, it is important that the opportunities and the methodology are appropriate, motivating and attractive for older persons. Local authorities and volunteer groups play a crucial role in offering learning services and personal support.

Ten: The advances in artificial intelligence technologies are enormous and will be growing with great speed. Even there may be certain dangers in this process, they encompass huge opportunities for the amelioration of many aspects of human living conditions. It is easily imaginable that they procure many benefits for older persons – if developed and implemented in the right way. This requires without any doubt a new approach in their conceptualisation where the users – in this case older persons – act as co-creators of the systems. This must start with the assessment of the needs of older persons, through the design and easy handling of the features, the testing of the hardware and software, the monitoring of the implementation, the evaluation of the results and the readjustment of the system, if necessary.

It was of the general opinion of the participants of the Conference working groups that the objective “**Aiming at Better Living Conditions in Older Age**” is, in accordance with the Fundamental Rights Charters and national Constitutions, one of the most important responsibilities of every European State. It must create the moral, legal and factual conditions to reach this goal, in collaboration with all other societal actors - politicians, administrative actors, economic managers, service providers, cultural creators, spiritual thinkers and civil society leaders in all living domains.