



The European Federation of Older Persons

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Copenhagen 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 30 European countries and has, since a long time, consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

In April 2026, the European Federation of Older Persons, EURAG, organised together with Danish Seniors and Global Seniors, Denmark, a conference in the Danish Parliament, Copenhagen, titled:

“Future of the Elderly. Active Ageing and Civil Participation in a Changing World”

Through presentations by eminent researchers, politicians, representatives of the younger and the older generation, as well as examples from civil society organisations across Europe, the conference explored how older persons can contribute to the strengthening and development of democracy, solidarity and social cohesion in a fast-changing and ageing European society, a continent currently facing severe challenges and subject to frozen or armed conflicts in certain areas, as was concretely expressed in the presentations from Ukraine and Moldova.

The present declaration summarises the main findings – conclusions and recommendations – of the trans-national debate during the conference, reflecting difficulties and new perspectives created by the present process of rapid political, economic, social and cultural change, especially for the position, perception and responsibilities of older persons in European society.

To start with, it was strongly emphasised that the citizens and decision-makers of European society must acknowledge and accept the scale and depth of the consequences for Europeans' living conditions, as well as the need for a united support for the core values upon which European society is built. This is the only way to constructively address the new challenges and will facilitate the search for adequate policies and strategies.

European society, and especially the major players in it, must fully understand that older persons are an integral part of society, that they have the same inalienable human and fundamental rights as all the other members of society and that social cohesion can only be realised if they are not pushed to the margins of society but rather receive the attention, support and care according to their needs.

History has given Europeans the vision of a true humanistic society, whose values are to be achieved through the principles of unconditional “human dignity”, “freedom”, “equality”, and “solidarity” in a rule of law. These principles must be implemented in a democratic system based on the active participation of citizens.

Through the creation of proper opportunities and incentives, older persons must be actively involved in the democratic process. Their role is to help implement our values and objectives, thus enhancing everyone's living conditions and shaping the future of society by drawing on their wisdom and experience developed over a lifetime.

It is of utmost importance to be aware of the fact that older persons are not at all a homogeneous group but, due to their life experiences, most diverse individuals with a great variety of attitudes, capacities, beliefs and opinions. Furthermore, it has to be taken into account that European society is composed of people from many origins and backgrounds. They all should clearly be put into a position to contribute to, participate in and benefit from the accomplishments of society.

The defence of freedom must be considered as an indispensable basis of human existence as it means the absolute refusal of domination and unjustified treatment. It must guarantee for everybody the right of individual independence and self-determination, the right to associate, the right of personal choice, and the right to accept responsibilities or decline undue obligations. The guarantee of these rights is important for all persons, particularly individuals with reduced capacities.

Equality must be implemented on the one side by “treating equals equally”, and on the other side by “ensuring that unequals are not treated equally”. Only through the full application of this principle, especially in social and tax policy, can needy, disadvantaged and defenceless persons be properly protected. Equality, recognition and respect are most important for all persons perceived as being different from the majority of people in society.

Solidarity in society must be seen as the bond that creates cohesion in society and thereby the foundation for welfare. In particular, intergenerational solidarity is crucial, and it is therefore an important task at all levels of society to organise it according to principles of solidarity. Solidarity and the readiness to share must be understood and trained at any age. This should be promoted through an intensive dialogue between the older and the younger generation.

Older persons must be considered as guardians of the precious values of European society who can pass on elements which constitute the quality of our living together. Consequently, it must be ensured that their voluntary participation in public discourses and societal decision-making processes is encouraged and supported. Also, it is of paramount importance to make sure that they are fully respected and that their contribution to the development of society is honoured.

Some very important elements must always be core features of all processes affecting the nature and the orientation of society: transparency, responsibility, accountability and inclusiveness. That means, among others, that nobody should be prevented from participating, that nothing should be decided on people without involving them and that no one should be marginalised or left behind.

It is a central responsibility of all actors in society to associate or even closely involve older persons in their work addressing the current challenges European society has to face so that ways and solutions can be elaborated that serve effectively to find adequate, fair, acceptable and finally successful solutions for the present situation and also for the shaping of the future.

For and on behalf of EURAG,
Copenhagen, June 20, 2026

Dirk Jarré
President

Co-organisers of the Copenhagen Conference:

Peter Rudolf Hansen
Danish Seniors

Povl Anker Andersen
Global Seniors