



“Human rights do not diminish with age”

A global awareness-raising campaign against ageism

PRESS RELEASE – Brussels, Belgium – 1st October 2018

UNDER EMBARGO until 1st October 2018, 10 am

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) will celebrate its 70th anniversary this year. AGE Platform Europe, with partners active in the promotion of human rights, is seizing this momentum to launch a 70-day awareness campaign for “Ageing Equal”. Testimonies and research from around the world prove that ageism is the most widespread discrimination. As we are all getting older, ageism affects or will affect all of us. And yet: because it is often more socially accepted, ageism is one of the least known form of discrimination. Fighting ageism should be everyone’s concern: it is time to take action against it!

Stand up against ageism

Globally, the number of persons aged 80 years or over is projected to increase more than threefold between 2017 and 2050, rising from 137 million to 425 millionⁱ. Ageist attitudes lead to the marginalisation, poverty and abuse of older persons and have negative impacts on their health and well-beingⁱⁱ. Research has shown that people with more negative age stereotypes live on average 7.5 years less than those with more positive attitudes to ageingⁱⁱⁱ.

Pervasive ageism is embedded in our cultures, institutions and policies. It prevents us from enjoying our human rights when we reach older age and from recognizing the harmful effects of discrimination in older age. For example, age limits that hamper the participation of older workers in trainings are still widespread today. For unemployed over 55, it is more likely that they will not be employed again. In some EU member states, older people above the age of 70 are denied the right to rent a car regardless of their driving abilities. If these discriminations were based on sex or race, we would find them unacceptable – why are they permitted on the ground of age?

70 days to learn and act

The momentum launched by the United Nations to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the UDHR is reminding us that human rights are rights that everyone enjoys,

regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or race, belief or religion, sexual orientation or property, etc. For 70 days, the “Ageing Equal” campaign will invite you to reflect on the prevalence and gravity of ageism and on the importance to stand up for your rights no matter what age you are.

The campaign will kick-off on 1st October, the International Day of Older Persons, and will culminate on 10th December, the International Human Rights Day. It will be structured around 10 thematic weeks reflecting the diversity of experiences in older age and the multiple discrimination experienced by different groups as they grow older. The campaign will invite everyone to become vocal about this unrecognised denial of human rights, and hopefully will draw a path to create a society for all ages.

Useful resources

- Campaign blog: ageing-equal.org (live from 1st October 2018)
- Campaign communication toolkit: trello.com/b/q14dqegb including a joint statement from Members of the European Parliament Intergroup subgroup on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations that will be updated regularly as we receive more signatures from MEPs
- Campaign page on AGE website: bit.ly/AGE-AgeingEqual

Press contact

For any query or to organise an interview with AGE members or partners, please contact: Estelle Huchet, estelle.huchet@age-platform.eu



ⁱ World Population Ageing United Nations Report 2017:

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/WPA2017_Highlights.pdf

ⁱⁱ The Fundamental Rights Report 2018 of the Fundamental Rights Agency describes the impacts of ageism on individuals and society as a whole and calls for a ‘rights-based’ approach to ageing, reminding that the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights apply to everyone: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/frr-2018-focus-rights-based-ageing>

ⁱⁱⁱ Levy, B., Slade, Martin D., Kasl, S. V., Kunkel, S. R., (2002), *Longevity increased by positive self-perceptions of ageing*, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 83, no.2, 261-270 quoted in Royal Society for Public Health (2018), *That Age Old Question - How attitudes to ageing affect our health and wellbeing*: <https://www.rsph.org.uk/uploads/assets/uploaded/010d3159-0d36-4707-ae54e29047c8e3a.pdf>

