



ESO

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01 October 2025: International Day of Older Persons

“As this year’s theme reminds us, older persons are powerful agents of change. Their voices must be heard in shaping policies, ending age-discrimination, and building inclusive societies”.

Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General

The 2025 United Nations International Day of Older Persons emphasizes the important role older people play as agents of change in society.

The theme, “Older Persons Driving Local and Global Action: our Aspirations, our Well-Being and our Rights,” underlines their contributions to health equity, financial security, community resilience, and human rights.

Key global policies, such as the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, support these principles. In April 2025, progress continued as the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution to develop a legally binding instrument to protect the rights of older persons, recognizing them as active rights-holders and leaders of positive change.



Why Europe must support a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons

Europe is experiencing rapid population ageing, with nearly a third of its population projected to be over 60 by 2050. Despite this, older persons remain insufficiently protected under current international and domestic laws, as existing treaties and instruments do not explicitly address age discrimination or the specific challenges faced by older people. Non-binding measures like the Madrid International Plan and UN Principles lack the force necessary to prevent neglect, exclusion, and ageism.

ESO stress the urgent need for a binding United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons, drawing parallels with the impact of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Such a convention would establish enforceable standards, protect against discrimination and violence, and affirm older persons as rights-holders.

Europe, given its strong tradition of human rights advocacy and comprehensive ageing policies, is urged to lead and endorse this initiative to ensure dignity and equal rights for all as populations continue to age.

Dr Anthony DeGiovanni

Labour Veterans (Malta)

Vice-president ESO

European Action plan for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR)

The European Commission has initiated a consultation to develop a new action plan for implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights, aiming to create a fairer and more inclusive Europe while improving living and working conditions.

The forthcoming action plan will serve as a guiding framework for European social policy until 2029, with further debates and decisions to be undertaken by the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, and the Council of Ministers.



EPSR: ESO draws attention to European senior policy

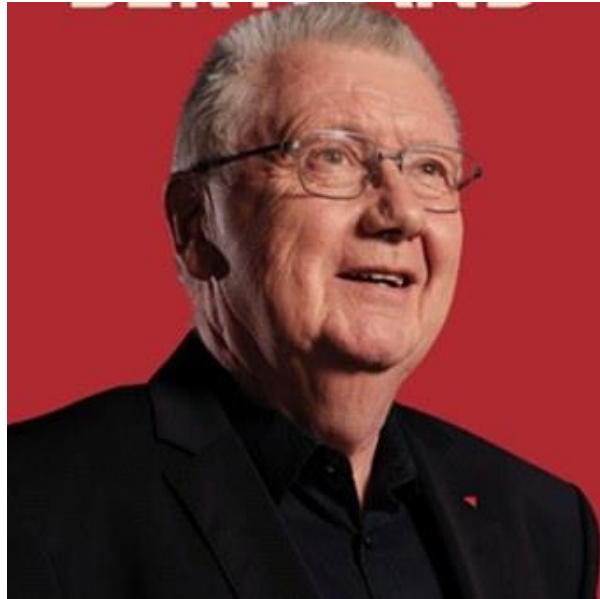
ESO has actively participated in this process, submitting recommendations based on its election memorandum 2024–2029 action program. They stress the importance of shifting narratives about aging to emphasize active citizenship, equality, and intergenerational solidarity.

ESO calls for placing seniors' needs—including income, housing, healthcare, and protection against ageism—at the forefront of European policy agendas. ESO also recommends simplifying access to social benefits, enhancing the European Agency for Fundamental Rights, supporting a United Nations Convention on Older Persons Rights, and increasing funding for civil society organizations focused on seniors.

You can find our contribution on the European Commission's [website](#) or on our [ESO website](#).

Jos Bertrand

ESO President



PES Congress (Amsterdam, 16-18 October)

"A European Senior Citizens Policy - A Future for Today's Young People!"

From October 16th to 18th, the European Socialists and Social Democrats will be hosting a "progressive mobilization" event in Amsterdam to address major societal challenges and promote a fairer, more sustainable future.

ESO, representing senior citizens' organizations with social democratic values, will organize a discussion on European senior policy, drawing on proposals based on their election memorandum and action program. Keynote speaker Christel Geerts will share insights from her experience in age-friendly policy, followed by a panel featuring representatives from European organizations and the European Commission. The event aims to explore concrete strategies and conditions for a comprehensive European seniors' policy.

You will find all the necessary information on the "progressive mobilisation" of the PES on the [PES-website](#)

Jos Bertrand



SP60+ non-member and yet involved

Switzerland is negotiating with the EU. It is not a member state and faces the difficult decision – via parliament and subsequent referendum – of whether a new bilateral agreement should fundamentally be updated and clarify its relations with the EU. The outcome of the political debate is still completely open, with the political right vehemently opposing the new agreement.

Membership and active participation in ESO is important for SP60+ . It is a chance to be part of a European network in ageing policy and it documents the progressive SP60+ connection to Europe. The founding of the EU was based on the terrible events of World War II and the upcoming desire for lasting peace in Europe. A wish that is still vivid in the minds of the members of SP60+.

Marianne de Mestral and Carlo Lepori

SP60+



European socialists and social democrats, defenders of the rights of older persons

The European socialist and social democratic parties are committed to safeguarding the rights and dignity of older people. Their approach emphasises social justice, supporting inclusive welfare systems, quality healthcare, and sustainable pensions to prevent poverty among the elderly. They actively fight age-based discrimination in the workplace, promote

lifelong learning, and encourage the social and political participation of older people to prevent isolation. Additionally, these parties advocate for robust legal protections against exploitation and abuse, with particular attention to the unique challenges faced by older women. Through these policies and actions, they strengthen both the rights of older citizens and the overall cohesion of European society.

Juan Gabriel Martínez Arcas

Mayores Socialistas / PSOE



Senior citizens under pressure – politically and scientifically

In Germany, senior citizens are facing both political and scientific pressure.

Inflation adjustment has been and continues to be a major problem in Germany. It highlights the disparity between pensioners and retirees, with civil servants benefiting more than employees.

Furthermore, scientists have recently increasingly come up with the idea of burdening pensioners in order to save the world: pensioners are to blame. They are too expensive.

Blaming pensioners for economic challenges is a distraction from deeper issues like the unequal distribution of wealth, income, and educational opportunities. Several proposals—such as extending working life, enforcing social service for pensioners, and cutting benefits for the elderly—are criticized as naive and as diverting attention from necessary structural reforms.

SPD 60+ calls for more honesty in addressing systemic inequalities rather than placing the burden on older citizens.

Lothar Binding

Bundesvorsitzender der AG SPD 60 plus



PVÖ : Birgit Gerstorfer Elected as New President

For the first time, a woman now leads the Pensioners' Association of Austria, representing the interests of the older generation. At the Extraordinary National Conference of the Pensioners' Association of Austria (PVÖ) on Friday, 4th of July 2025, Birgit Gerstorfer, MBA, was elected as the new Association President of PVÖ with 96.6 percent of the delegates' votes.

The newly elected PVÖ President emphasized: "Representing the interests of the older generation is now my most important task. And I will approach this with full commitment — in all social matters and with any government!"



PVÖ : Protest Action in front of the Austrian Parliament

The Pensioners' Association of Austria (PVÖ) staged a protest in front of Parliament, demanding a full 2.7 percent pension adjustment for all retirees. They oppose the

government's plan to fully offset inflation only for pensions below 2,500 euros, with higher pensions receiving just a fixed monthly increase.

PVÖ President Birgit Gerstorfer insists that all pensioners deserve full inflation compensation to maintain their purchasing power and trust in the system, emphasizing that pensioners already contribute significantly to budget consolidation through higher health insurance contributions. The association calls for fairness, justice, and respect for the older generation.

Sabine Wlazny

PVÖ

