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European Senior Organisation – PES seniors

Activity report 2025

As an **umbrella organization of socialist and social-democratic senior-organizations in Europe**, ESO – PES seniors bring together representatives coming from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Romania, Spain and Switzerland.

ESO aims to improve the position of senior citizens in Europe, their access to fundamental rights and their participation in political decision processes. Therefore, we need *a fundamental shift in the narrative about older persons and a rights-based approach to ageing*. **This narrative sees “older persons” as full contributors to society from the perspectives of “active-citizenship, self-determination, emancipation and equality” where solidarity is an indispensable component.** That is why ESO attaches great importance to solidarity among all generations.

We take aware the wellbeing of each individual regardless of age. **The needs and rights of older persons have to be on the European agenda:** building towards an age friendly society, solidarity between all generations, decent income for all, addressing the problem of housing and adapted housing, accessible and face to face services in the era of digitalization, the cost and quality of care and healthcare, the problem of ageism and discrimination and the disrespect of human rights of older people.

To this end, ESO will represent the interests of senior citizens and their organizations in the European governing bodies. ESO contributes to the public debate on ageing, inter-generational solidarity, consumer protection, social security and economic protection (pensions and allowances), housing, health-care, care and long term-care and communicates its position in the most effective way possible, e.g. by participating actively in the consultation-initiatives from the European Commission, participation in AGE-Europe Platform and in the PES. Lastly, we promote and safeguard the social, cultural and economic interests of senior citizens in Europe and strengthen senior citizens' participation and active involvement in society.

ESO will also stimulate their member-organisations to address the European and international dimension in senior policies in their own activity. We should explain our members and militants why Europe and internal cooperation is important for seniors and where social democrats make the difference: intergenerational solidarity, age-friendly cities and communities (including digitalisation), full participation in all aspects of society, adapted and affordable housing, access to care. In other words: How can Europe help cities and municipalities, regions and states to improve their senior policy? More investments in social services and adapted housing, criteria for age-friendly cities, villages and communities, promotion of good public transport in rural and urban areas.

2025, where we stand as an organization

ESO a member of the PES family ! Old is not “out”

Since a few years we experience in the PES and in the socialist family, an increasing interest in seniors and their specific needs. We are happy to participate in several working groups organised by the policy unit from the PES and into the coordination group. We enjoy our cooperation with the PES-sector organisations, especially with YES. We do appreciate this involvement and working together.

Since the PES Congress in 2023, ESO – PES-seniors is mentioned explicitly as the Senior-network of the PES in its statutes. In 2024 and 2025 we have also invest in our contacts within our S&D group in the European parliament, the PES group in the Comity of the regions (COR) and in our Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS). We are happy with the involvement from FEPS in the draft from our multi-annual working programme 2024 – 2029.

Despite this, there is still much work to be done. As we have asked for several years, we want be **recognized as a full member of PES**, to have the right to participate in the PES Presidium, in the same way as other sectorial organizations: PES-women, YES, Rainbow-rose and our Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS). **We reiterate asking to reinforce our cooperation towards a full recognized sectorial organization of the PES and to have access to the PES-presidium on the same foot as other sectorial organizations.** We regret – despite several demands – that our PES-presidency don't find any time to discuss this issue with us.

The biggest obstacle to full membership seems to be the fact that ESO – PES seniors only cover 12 countries and that we need more member organizations from unrepresented countries. **The problem is that a number of national parties do not, or no longer, have special departments, branches, organizations or working groups for their older members.** Therefore, we ask the parties from member-states, which are not yet active in ESO, to participate in our organization. It is very disappointing that we only got 2 responses to our request to all parties: Cyprus and the Italian PSI. So we were able to add 2 new organizations during 2024. **In 2025 we design a vice-president with the follow-up of this important challenge and to look how establish cooperation with PES-member parties and socialist organisations in those countries who are not represented in ESO.**

But above all, the lack of interest of the many parties makes us think about how our socialdemocratic movement deals with its older militants. Older persons are also committed citizens and militants, who count as active participants in decision-making and policy-making processes. Moreover, as the number of older persons steadily increases, older militants need more attention to help to attract voters for the socialist and social democratic movement.

On the other hand, ESO-PES seniors regret the lack of coordination between sector organisations in our family. We reiterate our demand for more attention to activists and sector-organizations in PES. Therefore, we are asking explicitly for more coordination and deliberation and regular contacts. We are glad to cooperate within our common PES family with YES, PES-women, Rainbow-rose and the FEPS.

ESO – PES-seniors as umbrella organisation from social democratic inspired senior-organisations.

ESO run completely on a voluntary basis. In 2025 we have renewed our Board and you will find our new organisational as annexe 1.

In 2025 we have refreshed and reactivate our Website www.socialistseniors.eu , where you can now follow all our activities and find all our publications, including contributions to the European Commission's public consultations. **We also launched an ESO Newsletter**, publishing five issues in

2025, to regularly inform our constituents and the network about our activities and positions. We still stay active on facebook <https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanSeniorOrganisation>

ESO – PES-seniors is full member from the AGE-Europe platform, the most representative overall organization for older persons.

We continue to organize our proper activities, more specific with our half-yearly seminars and we increase the number of general assemblies and board meetings thanks to the digital tools.

2025 was the first year after European elections and from the new Commission presided by Ursula Vonder Leyen, with - for us as socialists and democrats as leading political force on the left - a heavy challenge to counter the shift in society and in politics to the right and the far right. **We will support our socialist and democratic movement and we work for greater cooperation between progressive and democratic forces and with the broader civil society of which we are a part.**

Our multi-annual working-programme 2024 -2029, defined in 2024, forms the basis for our positions and contributions and more especially to the European Commission's proposals and initiatives that affect older people and can shape policy for older persons..

However, these actions have meant that we have done little with what we already noted in our 2023 annual report as one of the most important challenges: **"the so-called depoliticization of civil society organizations, which applies in particular to the Scandinavian countries, the Flanders region in Belgium and now also Austria.** In these countries, social-democratic and socialist-oriented organizations were depoliticized, either to meet new government funding requirements or in an effort to attract new members. This depoliticization of civil society **is a trend in democratic societies**, imposed primarily by the right, and is a worrying trend that significantly contributes to the divide between citizens and politics. Democratic societies need a strong civil society as a educational tool for civic engagement and as a driving force for political action. As social democrats, we must reconnect with our roots: the education of our supporters and their emancipation. Alongside civil society, we must reconnect and rebuild our society.

In the meantime, we, as umbrella organisation for senior organizations referring to socialist and democratic values, must look for new forms of cooperation, representation structures in the light of this growing gap between civil society and politics and the needs of seniors to participate from their ideological point of view in the preparation and implementation of policies that concern them.

We should discuss this item internally and within our political family and in larger society. In the main time we should look.

Actions to tackle our challenges

ESO contribution in policy-making activities

To strengthen our relationship with PES, ESO president Jos Bertrand participated in the **PES coordination team meetings, the Social Europe Network meetings and the PES working group meetings on economy and finances.** We also contribute in several activities from the Foundation for European Progressive Studies more concrete, on intergenerational solidarity and on housing.

Building on our commitment to maintaining face-to-face services in essential services, and what we have done in 2024, we also contributed to **a European call for "accessible essential services of line"** launched on 30 January in the European Parliament, with the participation of civil society

organizations such as AGE-platform Europe, SOLIDAR, the European Anti-Poverty Network, FEANTSA, EDRI, .. and hosted by the S&D, Greens, and Left group in the EP.

We actively contributed in the **preparation from the PES Congress and progressive mobilisation from Oktober 2025 in Amsterdam**. Our President Jos Bertrand, was invited to address the Congress by the presentation from the resolution on social rights.

On November 29, our Vice President, Anthony De Giovanni address the **meeting from the Socialist International in Malta**.

On December 2025 we have invite the 2 other political European senior organisations, who are member in AGE, the European Seniors Union (ESU), linked to the PPE, and the European Green seniors, linked with the European Greens, for a first meeting with our contacts in the respective groups in the EP, Idoia Mendia for the S&D, Michel Michał Szczerba (MEP PPE) and Goran Bosanac (MEP Greens). Together with AGE Platform Europe, we were looking how to join our forces in order to have senior interests and intergenerational solidarity on the European agenda.

We were also active in the public consultations from the European Commission where we deliver 3 opinions, on the multiannual Financial Framework, on the European Intergenerational fairness strategy, and on the new action programme implementing the European Pillar of fundamental rights. Our ESO contributions refers to our own ESO-working programme 2024 - 2029 that we drafted in 2024 and finalised early 2025. **In our contributions we also argue for more cooperation with other international organisations as the UNO and the WHO. We also ask European institutions and member states to be active in the process towards an UN Convention for the right for older persons.**

We participate also in **several policy breakfast in the EP**, one on digitalisation and one on European senior policy.

Activities and conferences

On April 29, the European day for intergenerational solidarity, together with the YES and supported by PES and FEPS, we visit the Calico- cohousingproject in Forest (Brussels), where older persons and youngster lives together, a project from the Community Landtrust Brussels that provide affordable housing for young and older persons. We hold very interesting discussions with Idoia Mendia (MEP – PSOE), Andreas Schieder (MEP-SPÖ), Pascal Smet (COR member [Vooruit](#)), Yondec Polet (deputy-secgen PES and COR member PS(B), Charles Spapens (mayor from Forest) and Geert Depauw (CLTB). Older militant socialists and young socialists will work together for affordable and adapted housing and habitats. Common challenges need common actions.

Not only in Brussels, but also in **Austria, Malta, Switzerland and Spain**, our member organisations were active on this day dedicated to intergenerational solidarity

On May 7 and 8, we visited our Austrian member organization, PVÖ, learned about the work of our Austrian friends, and learned about important aspects of senior policy in Vienna. On May 7, we held in Vienna our **general assembly**, where we renewed the board.

During our stay in Vienna, we also organised an **extensive contact with the European Agency for Fundamental Rights**. With FRA, we specifically discussed discrimination against older people in accessing their rights.

We participate also with a delegation to the **PES Congress in Amsterdam on October 16 and 17**, where we organised a **General Assembly** but also on our proper **ESO-workshop on “towards an European senior policy, a future for our youngsters”** with a presentation by Prof. Christel Geerts, prof in Gerontology and president from Solidaris and a discussion with Idoia Mendia (MEP – PSOE), Joao Martins Pereira (President YES) and Jos Bertrand (President ESO).

Representations outside

ESO remained a full member in **AGE European Platform** and is strongly supporting the work from this overall umbrella organization where both national and European older people's organisations participate, and where a great deal of expertise comes together to shape European and international policy for older people.

As ESO, we were active in the AGE Board and general assembly. We also placed our own priorities on the AGE agenda: decent income and adapted housing and care, age friendly cities and communities and solidarity between generations, monitoring the access to fundamental and human rights, dualization provoked by digitalization from services.

We were present in the Boardmeetings and the General assembly in Leuven and in de annual AGE meeting in Copenhagen, where we also **visited the UN-city and had also a very interesting exchange with e WHO – unit on active and healthy ageing.**

In 2025 we facilitate the contact within our family in the European parliament. We are active in the Interest group Europe for all ages into the European parliament.

Management activities

As initiated in 2024 we will increase the involvement from the representatives of the member organisations better in the substantive functioning of our organisation and to give them a clearer function as a link between our umbrella organization and their member-organizations. In doing so, the board would concentrate on the management of the organization such as the organization of the activities, the communication, the financial aspects.

ESO organized **3 board meetings and 5 general assemblies in 2025** in order to manage the operation of ESO. Subsequently, we have a greater number of general assemblies with the aim of strengthening the substantive work through increased input from representatives of the member organisations.

There were also several on-line consultations and contacts on the organization from the secretary between President and Secretary general; and also, with the financial unit from the PES

Overview interventions and meetings

| Name of meeting | Date | Location |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Meeting with PES-finance | 23 January | Brussels – PES HQ |
| ESO – Board meeting | 28 January | On-line |
| ESO General assembly | 28 January | On-line |
| PES – coordination meeting | 29 January | On-line |

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| Launch from the European campaign: “essential service must accessible – even of line” | 30 January | Brussels - EP |
| Policy Breakfast on European senior policy hosted by Idoia Mendia (MEP – S&D) ESO representation by Vice-president | 5 February | Strasbourg - EP |
| Contact meeting ESO – YES | 11 February | Brussels – PES HQ |
| ESO preparatory meeting for visit to Vienna | 19 February | On-Line |
| Visit cohousing project Calico (prep. ESO-YES activity 29.4) | 27 February | Brussels - Forest |
| Preparatory meeting on 29.4 European Day on intergenerational solidarity | 7 March | Brussels PES HQ |
| Contact with cabinet Micallef on intergenerational fairness strategy | 10 March | Brussels - EC |
| ESO General assembly | 11 March | On-Line |
| PES coordination meeting | 13 March | On-Line |
| Contact meeting with S&D staff – NGO unit | 17 March | Brussels EP |
| Contact meeting with S&D staff – NGO unit | 26 March | Brussels EP |
| Policy Breakfast “Protecting the public from abusive AI-generated content” participation ESO by President | 9 April | Brussels EP |
| Preparatory meeting on 29.4 European Day on intergenerational solidarity | 16 April | Brussels PES HQ |
| Common ESO – YES activity on European Day on intergenerational solidarity | 29 April | Brussels – Project Calico Forest |
| ESO General Assembly | 5 May | Vienna – PVÖ HQ |
| ESO visit to “Hauser zum leben” Vienna | 6 May | Vienna |
| ESO visit to “EU Fundamental Rights Agency” | 6 May | Vienna - FRA |
| ESO-Statement on the 80 th anniversary of the end of world-war II | 8 May | Vienna |
| ESO Board Meeting | 26 May | On-Line |
| Intergenerational Dialogue and Workshop. GCE & the JRC – preparation Intergenerational fairness strategy by COM JRC | 2 June | Brussels - EC |
| FEPS – round table on intergenerational strategy | 3 June | Brussels - FEPS |
| PES – Social policy Network | 3 June | Brussels PES-HQ |
| AGE Preparatory meeting for GA | 13 June | On-line |
| AGE – General Assembly (ESO represented by President) | 16 – 18 June | Leuven |
| ESO General Assembly | 28 June | On-line |
| FEPS – round table on evaluation European Parliaments elections | 2 July | Brussels EP |
| PES Coordination meeting | 9 July | On-line |
| AGE – contact meeting with Sec gen and staff | 18 July | Brussels AGE HQ |
| PES – Financial and Economical Network | 18 July | Brussels PES HQ |
| PES – ESO preparatory meeting on PES congress in Amsterdam | 27 Augustus | On-line |
| PES – ESO - YES preparatory meeting on the PES congress | 2 September | PES - HQ |
| PES coordination meeting | 4 September | On-Line |
| ESO Board meeting | 5 September | On-Line |
| AGE General Assembly | 1 Oktober | Copenhagen |
| AGE visit to WHO – active ageing unit | 2 Oktober | Copenhagen – UN-city |
| Meeting with Idoia Mandia (MEP-S&D) (copresident Interest group intergenerational solidarity) | 14 Oktober | Brussels EP |

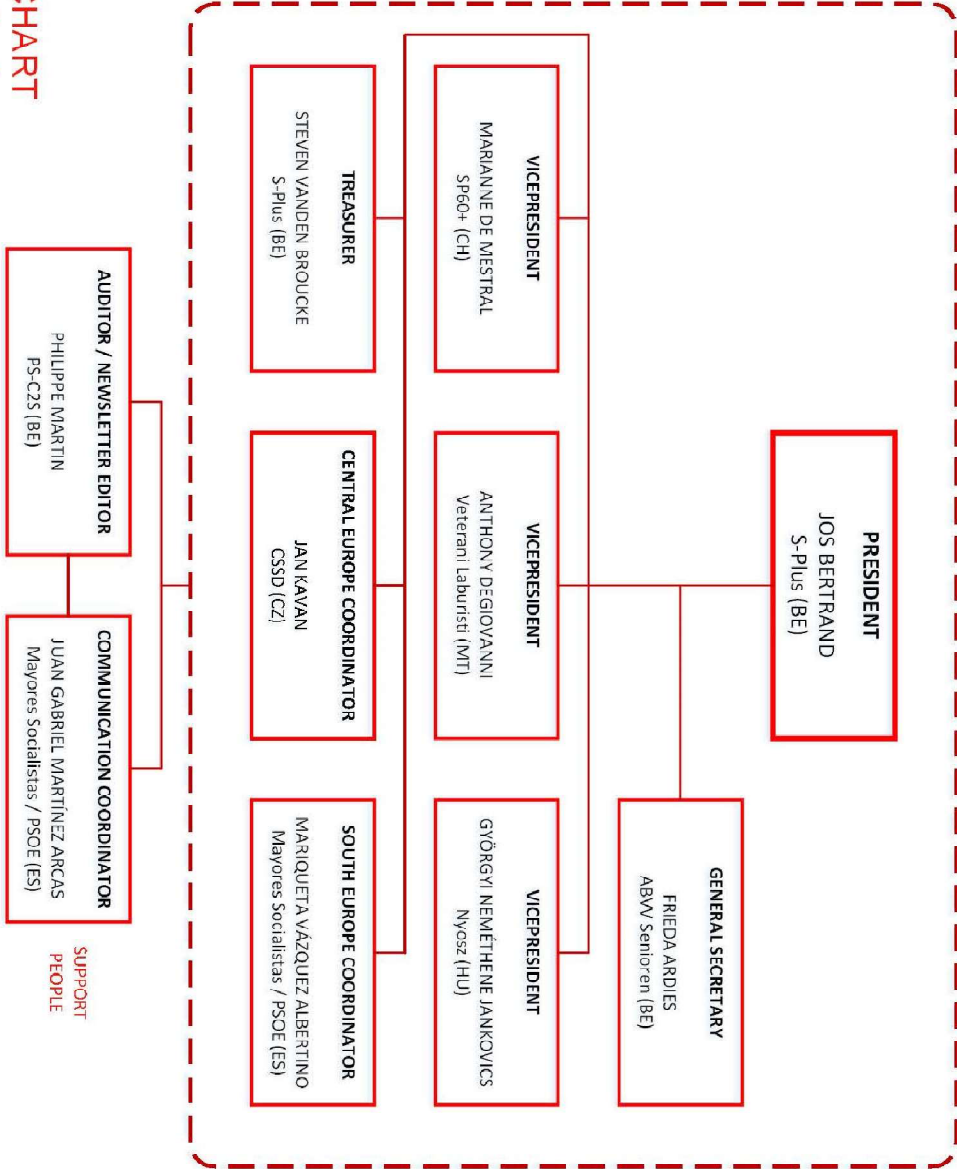
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| ESO General Assembly | 16 Oktober | Amsterdam – Beurs van Berlage |
| ESO Fringe meeting “an European Senior Strategy – a future for our youngsters” Christel Geerts – Idoia Mendia – Joao Martins – Pereira | 16 Oktober | Amsterdam – Berus van Berlage |
| PES – Congress – participation from ESO | 16 – 17 Oktober | Amsterdam – Berus van Berlage |
| Meeting with Estelle Ceulemans (MEP – S&D coordinator EMPL) | 4 November | Brussels - EP |
| Debate “New intergenerational Contract” | 4 November | Brussels - German Permanent Representation |
| PES – Meeting ESO – YES | 17 November | Brussels – PES HQ |
| Meeting Idoia Mendia (coordination ESO – EP) | 20 November | Brussels EP |
| Socialist Internatiolists Meeting Adress by ESO Vice president | 29 November | Malta |
| Meeting ESO – ESU – EGS with S&D – PPE – Greens representatives and AGE | 9 December | Brussels EP |
| FEPS Meeting on housing policy | 9 December | Brussels EP |
| PES Financial and economical network | 10 December | PES HQ |
| PES Coordination Meeting | 11 December | On-line |

Brussel, January 2026

Jos Bertrand, President ESO – PES-seniors



ORGANISATIONAL CHART
ESO Executive Commission





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ESO - Contribution to the Commission's public consultation on the new action plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights

As umbrella organization of socialist and social-democratic senior organizations in Europe, ESO–PES seniors bring together representatives from Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, and Switzerland.

ESO aims to improve the position of senior citizens in Europe, their access to fundamental rights, and their participation in political decision-making processes. Therefore, we need a fundamental shift in the narrative about older persons and a rights-based approach to ageing. **This narrative sees “older persons” as full contributors to society from the perspectives of “active-citizenship, self-determination, emancipation and equality,” where solidarity is an indispensable component.** That is why ESO attaches great importance to solidarity among all generations.

We care about the well-being of each individual regardless of age. **The needs and rights of older persons must be on the European agenda:** building towards an age friendly society, a decent income for seniors, addressing the problem of housing and adapted housing, accessible and face to face services in the era of digitalization, sustainable and good quality care and healthcare, ageism, discrimination, and disrespect of human rights of older people.

To this end, ESO represents the interests of senior citizens and their organizations in the European governing bodies. ESO contributes to the public debate on ageing, inter-generational solidarity, consumer protection, social security and economic protection (pensions and adequate income), housing, health-care, care, and long-term care, communicating its position in the most effective way possible. For example, ESO contributes regularly in the consultation initiatives of the European Commission, and participates actively in AGE-Europe Platform.

General remarks and proposals concerning the new Action-Plan.

ESO welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to work out a new action plan to implement the European-Pillar of Social Rights, while highlighting its own [ESO Work](#)

[Programme for 2024–2029](#), approved at the ESO seminar in November 2024, and which contains concrete proposals for a European policy on ageing and the rights for older persons.

Given the many new challenges and priorities, the challenge of the rapidly increasing ageing of the population and its consequences for our social systems, has faded into the background in recent years. However, ageing is and remains a very important challenge and the concerns of older persons need to be fully included in social policy agendas and plans. Therefore, similarly to other civil society organisations, and in particular AGE-Europe platform, **ESO calls for a rights-based, intersectional and life-course approach to social policy and an age equality perspective in the new action plan to implement the Pillar of Social Rights.** In concrete terms, ESO advocates **mainstreaming age equality across all 20 areas of the European Pillar of Social Rights**, in line with what we also address in our [contribution to the European Intergenerational Fairness Strategy](#): the development of **a European strategy for older people, including a European care guarantee.**

ESO is deeply concerned that access to rights is increasingly being hampered by all sorts of administrative procedures and requirements, and by widespread digitalization that affects older people more than others. That is why we **advocate for simple and accessible procedures and personalized, face-to-face guidance when applying for social benefits and rights and, where possible, an automatic entitlement to social benefits and security.**

ESO is asking for stricter monitoring of the access of older persons to fundamental rights both at European and at member state levels. In this context, we advocate **for strengthening the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), enabling it to regularly monitor older people's access to their rights at all levels.** This strengthening concerns its remit, staffing, and links to the competent services and administrations in the Member States. In line with this, we also expect the European Union and its Member States to support and commit to the realization of a United Nations Convention on Older Persons Rights.

ESO also advocates for **public funding of civil society organisations that work** for awareness-raising, participation and education of their target-groups.

ESO is also requesting sufficient **budgetary and human resources to support, to follow-up and to implement the action-plan.**

As active member from the AGE-Europe platform, ESO endorses the contribution of the AGE-Platform Europe. In addition, we would like to emphasize the following points regarding the 3 chapters and 20 principles/areas of the European Social Pillar:

Chapter 1 Equal opportunities and access to the labour market.

Ad 1 Education, training and LLL.

Permanent education should be accessible and affordable for all without age-distinction. The objective of reaching 80% of people having at least basic digital skills must be kept and expanded beyond the current 75 years age limit.

Therefore, age limits must be abolished and equal access to education must be expanded beyond the labour market.

Ad 2 Gender equality.

Initiatives to **address the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination** in every aspect of daily life, including in all relevant social, economic, and political domains, with attention to the lived experiences and challenges of older women.

Combat violence against older persons, particularly older women, by strengthening cooperation between key services and agencies to ensure better support services for older persons, including those staying in collective facilities and women victims of domestic or gender based violence.

Ad 3 Equal opportunities

An **intergenerational pact based on intergenerational solidarity** bringing together all generations, promoting more equality and inclusion, combating unwanted loneliness and exclusion.

Proposal for **an action programme against ageism and discrimination on age** and for promoting intergenerational solidarity.

Reopening of the discussion on the Commission Proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of **equal treatment** outside the labour market, irrespective of age, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religious belief. Such a Directive provides a comprehensive protection against discrimination in key areas of life, such as - for example - loans, assurances, driving-licences,

Intersectionality and mainstreaming of age equality in all European Union existing strategies such as those in relation to equality between women and men, LGTBI, migrants and different minority groups. Better mainstreaming of “ageing” as a touchstone for the development of new policies can be achieved by setting up a specific service within the Commission.

Ad 4 Active support to employment

Regarding the Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC): reassessment of the age-based exceptions and the permissible limitations regarding age discrimination in the field of employment at national level, which currently limits **equal access and participation in the labour market** and hinders efforts to promote longer, healthier working lives.

Promote the value of age-diverse workforces by encouraging employers, policymakers, and judiciary bodies to recognize the benefits of recruiting and retaining workers across all ages, challenging ageist stereotypes and discriminatory hiring practices.

Reflection on a European labour market policy in the care and health sector; investment at the European and national levels to foster a favourable national context for working in the care sector and to improve the working conditions and skills of formal and informal carers, often women. **Creation of a European curriculum for care professions** that guarantees good practice, working conditions and remuneration for employees in this sector.

Chapter 2 Fair working conditions

Ad 5 secure and adaptable employment.

Recognition and **taking into account the silver-economy and its effect on employment.**

Attention to the **working conditions of older workers and end-of-career situations**, with a specific focus on an intergenerational approach for transferring knowledge and skills between generations.

Ad 6 Wages

Initiatives to **close the pay-gap between men and women, as this has consequences for the pensions and the pension gap between women and men.** The risk continues to be higher for specific groups such as women who tend to earn less, have shorter, less linear careers, work part-time and take on more unpaid care responsibilities.

Ad 7 Information about employment conditions and protection in case of dismissals

Ad 8 Social dialogue and involvement of workers

Ad 9 Work Life balance

Strengthening of carers' leave by ensuring adequate amounts of paid leave and the right to flexible work, with clear EU standards and employer accountability. **Caregiving leave should be financially and structurally supported, with continued full social protection coverage, pension credits, and access to services.**

Broaden the definition of informal carers in EU law to ensure equal rights for all, including the self-employed and retired, while promoting the equal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men.

Ad 10 Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection

Improve physical working conditions along the working lives: reduce physical strain and ensure occupational health policies reflect ageing over the life course.

Promote mental wellbeing at all ages in the workplace culture: shape wellbeing policies, fostering an open and age-positive work environment, and addressing age-related health topics, such as menopause, without stigma.

Bridge the digital divide and design inclusive digital tools: offer tailored digital training and ensure workplace technologies are accessible to all, including those facing sensory or cognitive challenges.

Chapter 3 social protection and inclusion

Ad 11 Childcare and support to children

Child-care shall be included into our proposal for a **European Care Guarantee** (see below) as a project for intergenerational solidarity.

Ad 12 Social protection

On social protection and inclusion, we ask for **stronger income support systems, indexing incomes and pensions to the cost of living, and ensuring that minimum income schemes provide a dignified standard of living.**

Simple and accessible procedures and **personalized, face-to-face guidance when applying for social benefits and rights and, where possible, an automatic entitlement to social benefits and social protection.**

Ad 13: Unemployment benefits

Ad 14: Minimum income

Minimum-income should be higher than the poverty-level and should be indexed to the cost of living, ensuring that **minimum income schemes provide a dignified standard of living.**

Ad 15: Old-age income and pensions

Old-age income and pensions should enable older persons to live in dignity with access to adapted housing, health care, care and long-term care and to participate in all aspects of community life.

Measures to close the pay and pension gap between men and women. The risk continues to be higher for specific groups such as women who tend to earn less, have shorter, less linear careers, work part-time and take on more unpaid care responsibilities.

Ad 16 Healthcare

Presentation of an **EU Strategy for health promotion** and prevention and promotion of Prevention Agreements at European and national level amongst stakeholders ensuring a healthy live for everyone.

Address the shortage of healthcare workers, raise the status of less valued professions, and propose an initiative to develop geriatric skills across all healthcare professions in line with demographic change.

Address the issue of ‘medical deserts’, by mapping the proximity of generalist, specialist and hospital care services in the EU’s regions and encourage the creation of mobile or rural health centres through EU funds.

Boost age-related health research and care: invest in research on diseases affecting older people’s autonomy, ensure vaccination in old age, and address bias through an intersectional approach.

Reintroduce the objective to increase healthy life years in the EU’s research programme

Achievement of a **European Health Union**.

Ad 17: inclusion of people with disabilities

Ad 18: Long-term care

Creation of a “**European care guarantee**” (including childcare, longtime-care and care) that supports Member States and Regions in care policies and investment in care services and facilities. Strengthening local services with the objective to enable older persons to live their lives as independently as possible and to remain in their homes and environments, if they so wish.

Investment at European and national level to foster a favourable national context for working in the care sector and to improve the working conditions and skills of formal and informal carers, often women.

Ad 19 Housing and assistance for the homeless

A specific conceptual focus on “building for life” and “adapted housing” for older persons based on the principle of age equality, as well as providing a framework for redesigning the habitat conducive to a better quality of life and an enhanced community life, making the streets and open spaces more accessible for all ages.

Support for strong social and cultural movements for the re-invention of our Cities, Towns and Villages with the perspective of age equality. **Adhesion and support from the European Union to the WHO programme “age-friendly cities and communities”.**

Support for the concept of the ‘ten or fifteen-minute city’ wherein all the essential services are within a short walking distance from each other.

Ad 20 Access to essential services.

Investment for systems ensuring age equality in the provision of goods, services, and the habitat, and to sustain older people’s autonomy at all levels. Taking into serious consideration

the rapidly growing digital divide and the fact that many older people, due to the digitalisation of services, are deprived of access to essential services. Digitalisation must serve the citizen, for example, by strengthening face-to-face service provisions, and not the other way around.

In-depth reflection on the Digital exclusion and ensuing lack of access and a moratorium on the further digitalisation of services to the public. **Face-to-face service provision must remain the basis of all service provision**; digitalisation can contribute to strengthening this face-to-face service provision. **Beneficiaries should be involved in the design of services and regularly consulted to ensure their views and experiences are taken on board.**

Legally binding regulation that oblige service providers (especially in the financial sector) and public authorities to offer non-discriminatory face-to-face services in line with consumer protection regulations.

Prioritize **accessible and affordable public transport** in its funding programs to ensure door-to-door mobility, notably for people living in remote and/or segregated community/area.

Brussels, September 1, 2025



ESO (European Senior Organisation) – PES-seniors

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanSeniorOrganisation/>

On Web : <https://socialistseniors.eu/>

ESO's contribution to the European Commission's public consultation on the European Intergenerational Fairness Strategy. (second contribution)

ESO (European Senior Organisation) www.socialistseniors.eu – the European umbrella organization for older persons organizations committed to the social democratic values of solidarity, equality, and the respect for universal and democratic rights – aspires for a European intergenerational fairness strategy that aims for solidarity, equality, and non-discrimination, in accordance with the EU treaties.

In our view, this is only possible if the strategy relies on **a balanced set of supporting policy instruments**. In our previous contribution to the discussion – document attached – we pointed out the lack of **a European strategy for older persons, or an AGE equality strategy**, as a third building block alongside the existing youth strategy and guarantee and the child guarantee.

Aging is a policy priority that affects all generations: indeed, today's children and young people are tomorrow's older people, and the policies designed today will apply to them. Additionally, in reality that parents and grandparents often step in to care for their grandchildren when childcare is lacking, and parents are cared by their children when care and long-term care are not available.

We therefore regret the lack of support from the European Commission for a European strategy for older people or an AGE equality strategy, as a third cornerstone underpinning a European Intergenerational Fairness Strategy.

ESO therefore fully supports the proposal for an Action Programme Against Ageism with its nine flagships, as proposed by AGE-Platform-Europe.

We wish to express our concern about the growing distancing between generations. Rather than focusing on conflicting interests between generations, we are demanding to address the growing gap between (advantaged) rich and (disadvantaged) poor groups in society, between the highly educated and the less educated, and the large differences in life expectancy across these two sections of society. Aging requires an approach across the entire life cycle, with an emphasis on prevention. Aging also requires a fundamental shift in mindset about ageing: a positive mindset increases the chances of healthy and active aging.

Therefore, it is important that all generations strengthen each other, works together, and **that their organizations are strongly involved in the intergenerational and intragenerational strategy**. This strategy must be supported by a set of supporting policy instruments.

ESO draws the attention of the European Commission to the considerable experience and expertise in ageing-policy of the World Health Organisation (WHO), including its instrument for age-friendly cities and communities and the new "Aging is Living" strategy, and **urges genuine collaboration between the European Commission and the WHO.**

Attached you will find our previous written contribution to the consultation from June 2025, in which we also call for **a rights-based approach to ageing**, for a strong **directive on equal treatment and against discrimination, including discrimination based on age**, for the **provision of the necessary financial and human resources** to prepare, monitor and implement the strategies, and for the **recognition of all age groups involved, including older people and their organisations, as full citizens and partners in the process.**

Brussels, November 10. 2025

Annex to the second ESO-contribution on the European intergenerational fairness strategy



ESO (European Senior Organisation) – PES-seniors

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanSeniorOrganisation/>

On Web : <https://socialistseniors.eu/>

First ESO-contribution in the consultation from the European Commission for a European strategy for intergenerational fairness/solidarity.

A European Senior Strategy with a European care guarantee as third cornerstone for a European intergenerational solidarity/fairness strategy based on a human rights approach and with legally binding instruments against age discrimination and against agism.

- ESO welcomes the initiative from the European Commission to work out a European fairness/solidarity strategy and points to its ESO Work Programme for 2024–2029, approved at the ESO seminar in November 2024, which contains key elements for building this strategy. https://socialistseniors.eu/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/ESO_Multiannual_program_2024_2029.pdf
- This strategy should aim at **promoting solidarity between generations: young people, seniors and people who are unable to claim their rights** (such as children and future generations). A connection between past, present and future: older people who have learned from the past and from this experience want to help shape the future as full citizens in the present; young people who look forward to their future, who should be able to enjoy the fundamental rights acquired in the past and therefore also want to have a say in decision-making about their future; and children and future generations who do not yet have a say in this themselves.
- A European strategy for intergenerational solidarity should focus on three target groups (children, youth, seniors). As there already exist a strategy for protection from children defined in the Child-guarantee, and a European Youth strategy and guarantee, it should be logical and consistent to create a **“European senior strategy”** or **European AGE-equality-strategy** that mainstreams attention to older persons interest in different policy areas, as a third cornerstone for the building for this European intergenerational fairness/solidarity strategy. Therefore, ESO’s first demand in the European Intergenerational solidarity/fairness strategy will be: a European senior strategy that among other things **includes a European care guarantee for access to care and healthcare for all generations**. It is an analogy with SURE that was set up in unemployment during the COVID19-crisis; the care guarantee should concern elderly-care and longtime care and also include childcare.

- This European senior strategy will concern different policy-area's (we are looking to another international instrument as already exist by WHO: the WHO action programme for age-friendly cities and communities). In analogy with WHO, the strategy should concern different policy-areas, but the European strategy should be **based on a right-based approach on ageing**. We propose to consider following policy areas : **income**; **end of career** education/employment; access to **care and healthcare**; access to **services** (including financial services) / digitalisation; **age-friendly habitat** (housing and public spaces-planning in rural and urban environments); **mobility**; **full participation** (politics, social/cultural, economic) (note that digitalisation is a big burden for participation and widens the gap between the generations).
- ESO urges for **a horizontal equal treatment directive against discrimination, including the ground of age** and an **action plan against ageism**.
- These strategies can only be successful if provision is made for the **necessary resources** to implement and monitor these strategies, both **financially** (MFF and EU-budget) and in terms of **human resources**, for preparation, implementation and monitoring the strategies.
- **"Nothing about us, without us !"** Talking about senior policies and intergenerational solidarity, ESO pleads for full recognition of all target groups concerned as full-citizens. We notice that the Commissions department responsible for the strategy is the DG on education, youth, sport and culture and does not concern ageing or senior-policy. We notice also that seniors (because they are mostly not-longer in professional statutes) are not present in many - most informal but - very important networks involved in the definition of policies of their concern. Therefore, ESO is demanding **full and active participation of civil society in the elaboration of these strategies**, and in particular senior-organisations as AGE-Europe platform who organises most European, national and regional senior-organisations.

Brussels, June, 6 2025



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ESO - Contribution to the Commission's public consultation on the EU Multiannual Financial Framework.

An umbrella organization of socialist and social-democratic senior organizations in Europe, ESO–PES seniors brings together representatives from Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and Switzerland.

ESO aims to improve the position of senior citizens in Europe, their access to fundamental rights, and their participation in political decision-making processes. Therefore, we need a fundamental shift in the narrative about older persons and a rights-based approach to ageing. **This narrative sees “older persons” as full contributors to society from the perspectives of “active-citizenship, self-determination, emancipation and equality,” where solidarity is an indispensable component.** That is why ESO attaches great importance to solidarity among all generations.

We take aware the well-being of each individual regardless of age. **The needs and rights of older persons have to be on the European agenda:** building towards an age friendly society, decent income for seniors, addressing the problem of housing and adapted housing, accessible and face to face services in the era of digitalization, the cost and quality of care and healthcare, the problem of ageism and discrimination and the disrespect of human rights of older people.

To this end, ESO will represent the interests of senior citizens and their organizations in the European governing bodies. ESO contributes to the public debate on ageing, inter-generational solidarity, consumer protection, social security and economic protection (pensions and allowances), housing, health-care, care, and long-term care, and communicates its position in the most effective way possible, for example, by participating actively in the consultation initiatives from the European Commission, participation in AGE-Europe Platform and the PES. Attention is also being brought to the Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) and in particular Article 6(1), advocating further scrutiny of the permissible limitations regarding age discrimination in the field of employment at national level. Lastly, we promote and safeguard the social, cultural, and economic interests of senior citizens in Europe and strengthen senior citizens' participation and active involvement in society.

A financial framework that takes into account the specific challenges for an ageing society.

Given the many new challenges and priorities, the problem of the rapidly increasing ageing of the population and its consequences for our social systems has faded into the background in recent years. However, ageing is and remains a very important challenge that requires special attention. Therefore, **ESO calls for an age equality perspective in the debate for the forthcoming Multi-annual Financial Framework** in the context of the demographic realities.

ESO is requesting sufficient **budgetary resources to support and implement the European strategy for intergenerational solidarity/fairness** that is being drawn up at the request of the European Commission's President.

ESO calls on the European Union to budget for adequate investment for such systems that ensure **age equality in the provision of goods, services, and the habitat, and to sustain older people's autonomy at all levels**. We are particularly concerned about the rapidly growing digital divide and the fact that many older people, due to the digitalisation of services, are deprived of access to essential services. Digitalisation must serve the citizen, for example, by strengthening face-to-face service provisions, and not the other way around.

ESO calls on the European Union and Member States for specific support programmes to national, local, and regional authorities, which are often responsible for providing, commissioning, or overseeing long-term care services. We propose the creation of a **"European care guarantee"** that supports Member States and Regions in care policies and investment in care services and facilities.

ESO advocates for **investment at the European and national levels to foster a favourable national context for working in the care sector** and to improve the working conditions and skills of formal and informal carers, often women.

ESO looks forward to the **European Development Bank investment schemes that support habitat redesign and affordable housing**.

ESO also calls for equalisation funds aimed at overcoming territorial gaps.

Finally, ageing has consequences for the financing of the social systems and services in the Member States and regions. This requires a **reform of the financing at the Member States' level and a rethinking of European economic and fiscal coordination and of the tax systems in the direction of fiscal justice**.