



Against Ageism and Towards Active Social Citizenship for Older Persons. The Current Use and Future Potential of the European Social Charter and other European Instruments

11th Meeting of the COE-FRA-ENNHRI-EQUINET Platform on Social and Economic Rights

27 September 2021, 14:00 – 16:00 CET

Online KUDO event / [Live webcast](#)

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the 11th Meeting of the [COE-FRA-ENNHRI-EQUINET Collaborative Platform on Social and Economic Rights](#) are:

- To present the study “***Against Ageism and Towards Active Social Citizenship for Older Persons. The Current Use and Future Potential of the European Social Charter***” and consider its main thesis about the legacy of ageism in Europe and the need to use the European Social Charter to help roll it back;
- Through the study, to reflect on the adequacy and potential of the main European human rights standards for the advancement of the human rights of older persons and in particular the European Social Charter and the EU Charter for Fundamental Rights;
- To examine the recommendations set out in the study and discuss possible ways to advance and implement them at national level;
- To examine the role of National Human Rights Institutions and National Equality Bodies in advancing and protecting the rights of older persons at both the national and European level;
- To reflect on the central role of civil society in advocating against ageism and in utilising all available legal means including the European Social Charter to do so.

BACKGROUND

The idea for this study came from the COE-FRA-ENNHRI-EQUINET Collaborative Platform on Social and Economic Rights in 2020 and was financially supported by the Council of Europe, Department of the European Social Charter.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures it provoked raised an unprecedented collective challenge to the fundamental human rights of everyone. Older people were severely affected,

especially those living in institutional settings or with underlying health conditions. The COVID-19 pandemic not only highlighted the vulnerable situation of older persons, it also witnessed cases of ageism and human rights violations against older persons, particularly with regard to the rationing of health. The pandemic has made the institutionalisation of older persons not just a human rights issue but also a public health issue. Long-term care must mean more than institutionalisation. This is why, international organisations have been consistently promoting a rights-based approach to tackling the pandemic. And this approach has been heavily relied on through the whole study.

Therefore, the meeting aims to bring together national and international human rights players to discuss, on the basis of the published study, ways of improving the situation of older persons across Europe; to see how different international human rights standards can be optimised to uphold the rights of older persons and to inspire national policies ensuring respect for dignity, equality and non-discrimination.

The study also analyses the role of governments which represent the “power”, civil society – the “voice” of older persons and National Human Rights Institutions/Equality Bodies – the “ideas” and whether and how the European Social Charter can equip all of them to interact effectively in moving Europe away from the ageist laws and policies of the past.

More importantly, the study lays out a vision of how the Charter can be optimised in the future as Europe struggles to eliminate ageist laws and policies. Therefore, the meeting aims to examine the suggested recommendations and explore concrete ways of their implementation at national level.

PARTICIPANTS

The event is designed to bring together representatives of the Council of Europe, European Union and United Nations institutions and agencies, national human rights institutions, national equality bodies and civil society for a discussion on optimising the use of the Social Charter to combat ageism and strengthen the protection of the rights of older persons.

FORMAT / WORKING LANGUAGES

The meeting will be held via the Council of Europe online platform KUDO in English and French with simultaneous interpretation.

The event will be open, web casted and can be followed via [Web streaming](#) in English, French or original channels. Please note that the KUDO web cast does not allow to use the chat for questions. A specific email for questions will be provided in due course.

Please note that, following the request of several organisations, the event will be video recorded and published on the [European Social Charter web site](#).

DRAFT PROGRAMME

14.00-14.10 Opening

Welcoming remarks

- *Jan Malinowski, Head of the European Social Charter Department, Council of Europe*

14.10-14.25 Study “Against Ageism and Towards Active Social Citizenship for Older Persons. The Current Use and Future Potential of the European Social Charter”

Brief presentation of the study by the authors

- *Gerard Quinn, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities*
- *Israel (Issi) Doron, Head of the Centre for Research and Study of Aging, University of Haifa, Israel*

Q & A Session: Questions from **participants via e-mail**

14.30-15.00 Against Ageism Together: How different international and European standards address social and economic rights of older persons

Moderated by Aoife Nolan, Vice President of the European Committee of Social Rights and Professor of International Human Rights Law and Co-Director of the Human Rights Law Centre, School of Law, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom

European Social Charter – past, present & future.

- *Tatiana Puiu, Member of the European Committee of Social Rights*

European Convention on Human Rights – trends and possibilities.

- *Boglarka Benko, Lawyer at the European Court of Human Rights*

European Union Legal and Policy Instruments: Focus on European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights.

- *Patrycja Pogodzinska, Legal expert on social rights, European Union Fundamental Rights Agency*

United Nations OEWG and Prospects for a Thematic UN Treaty.

- *Claudia Mahler, United Nations Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons*

Q & A Session: Questions from **participants via e-mail**

15.10-15.40 Panel debate – the way ahead.

Moderated by Tena Šimonović Einwalter, Ombudsman of Croatia, Chair of the Equinet Executive Board

In the format of a panel debate, the session will focus on how different human rights standards can be used as a “roadmap” for creating an active social citizenship for older persons.

List of panellists:

- **Aoife Nolan**, Vice President of the European Committee of Social Rights and Professor of International Human Rights Law and Co-Director of the Human Rights Law Centre, School of Law, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom
- **Gabriel Toggenburg**, Policy Coordinator on the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights
- **Jacqueline Hoogendam**, Policy Coordinator, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, The Netherlands
- **Anna Chabiera**, Senior Specialist, Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, Poland
- **Nena Georgantzi**, Policy Coordinator on Human Rights and Non-discrimination, AGE Platform Europe

Q & A Session: Questions from **participants via e-mail**

15.50-16.55 Summing up of the panel discussion

Rapporteur's reflexions about the future

- *Colm O'Conneide, Professor of Constitutional and Human Rights Law at University College London (UCL), Former Vice President of the European Committee of Social Rights*

15.55-16.00 Closing

Concluding remarks

- *Tanya Montanari, Council of Europe Coordinator of the COE-FRA-ENHRI-EQUINET Platform on Social and Economic Rights*