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Slovensko predsedovanje Svetu Evropske unije
Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Background notes for participants

Human rights for all ages: Promoting a life course perspective and intergenerational cooperation to combat ageism

International online conference

18 November 2021

Introduction

Longer lives open a wealth of opportunities for individuals and society at large. To reap the benefits of longevity, both the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) have called for a coherent and holistic age-integrated, rights-based, life-course perspective, which aims to create equitable and sustainable societies and to enable everyone to realise their full potential across their life course¹. The Slovenian Presidency, as part of the EU trio that adopted the [Declaration on Ageing](#) in December 2020, is fully committed to promote a life-course perspective and a rights-based approach to ageing. Building on the commitments made in the [2020](#) and [2021](#) EU Council Conclusions adopted by the German and Portuguese Presidencies, the Green Paper on Ageing, and in line with the EU's ambition to build a 'Union of Equality', the conference organised by the Slovenian Presidency in collaboration with AGE Platform Europe and ZDUS, will discuss concrete strategies to combat ageism and apply a rights-based approach to ageing policies.

The central axes of the conference

Ageism

Ageism is widespread in institutions, laws and policies across the world. But ageism has serious consequences both for older people and society at large. Despite its pervasive nature and harmful effects, ageism still lacks a solid knowledge base of dedicated research, information, disaggregated data and systematic trends analysis. The event will draw on the UN Global report on ageism aiming to identify and promote strategies to reduce ageism at the EU level.

¹ See among others the EU Council Conclusions on Mainstreaming Ageing in Public Policies (2021), EU Council conclusions on Human Rights, Participation and Well-Being of Older Persons in the Era of Digitalisation (2020), Fundamental Rights Agency Report 'Shifting Perceptions-Towards a Rights-Based Approach to Ageing' (2018), UNECE Guidelines on Mainstreaming Ageing (2021) and UN Decade on Healthy Ageing.

Life-course perspective

The life-course perspective helps understand that ageing starts at birth and continues throughout life. It underlines the need to consider the vast diversity of the older population as well as our changing needs and capacities as we age. It recognises that past and present experiences are shaped both by our own choices but also by wider social and economic circumstances, including ageism, which hampers the equal enjoyment of all human rights at all ages.

Intergenerational solidarity and cooperation

Solidarity between generations is among the EU's founding values that can be found in Article 3.3 of the Lisbon Treaty. In modern societies, however, there are fewer intergenerational contacts and intergenerational cooperation is in peril. It is important to promote intergenerational cooperation and educational interventions to reduce ageism and enhance solidarity in society.