



Written Statement of BAGSO – Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Seniorenorganisationen to the United Nations Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on the Human Rights of Older Persons

Session 1 – Limitations and gaps of selected human rights norms and obligations

BAGSO, the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations, an umbrella organisation representing over 120 member organisations, welcomes the Multi-Stakeholder Meeting on the Human Rights of Older Persons on 29 and 30 August 2022 organised by the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

As organisation representing the interests of older people in Germany, also at the United Nations, BAGSO recognises the importance of this meeting in developing proposals to accelerate efforts to close protection gaps in international human rights law. In doing so, BAGSO aligns itself with the statements by the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP) and AGE Platform Europe, both of which BAGSO is a member.

As organisation that highly values old age as a phase of life that brings with it competences and resources for each individual and for society, we would like to highlight one area that is of particular concern to us: the right to education and learning. In our view, this is an issue of ever growing importance, especially in the context of the increasing digitalisation in all areas of life. Access to education, training and lifelong learning are crucial for societal participation. Examples of barriers due to a lack of access to learning opportunities are plentiful. Yet, there is no comprehensive framework in relation to the right to education.

This has severe implications also at national level. In Germany, for instance, education in later life was not even included in the recent National Report on Education – despite the fact that the report claims to be a systematic stocktaking of the entire education system in Germany. Hence, it does not provide a basis for political action either.

BAGSO therefore recommends the Human Rights Council to recognise the failure of existing international instruments to cover the right to learning and education in older age. In our view,

the standardisation and codification in one single document of the human rights of older persons, including the right to education, is essential for addressing the gaps and challenges we and many others see emerging. This is also imperative to generate action at national level.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our call upon Member States to start drafting a UN Convention now so that we can all, young and old, age with rights. The earlier the better.

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