|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | EUROPEAN UNION  Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office  and other international organisations in Geneva |

**United Nations Human Rights Council**

**OHCHR Multi-stakeholder Meeting on the Human Rights of Older Persons**

**29 August 2022**

**EU Statement**

Excellencies,

Distinguished panellists,

The EU welcomes this multistakeholder meeting and wishes to thank the panellists for their insights into the topic and note with appreciation the activecontributions of the civil society to the debates.

It goes without saying - the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted a number of **particular challenges in the enjoyment of human rights by older persons**. Allow me to highlight only a few - health support, prevention of and protection against violence, abuse and neglect, equality and non-discrimination, social protection and social inclusion, access to justice, equitable and quality education and lifelong learning.

A matter of particular concern for the EU are **multiple and widespread forms of discrimination faced by older women**, including on the grounds of gender, age, disability or any other grounds. The EU recognises and respects the rights of all persons, including the older persons, to lead a life of dignity and independence and to participate in social and cultural life.

As the pandemic disproportionally affected older persons, the EU and its member states have put a human-rights based approach to the crisis at the forefront of our actions. As we heard today, the pre-existing inequalities in human rights protection persist and we must aim to do everything in our power, to **strengthen our efforts and coordinated actions** to ensure that older persons can preserve their dignity, independence and autonomy, while holistically considering the needs of all age groups.

The EU shares the view that more can and should be done to improve the situation of older persons, to ensure their meaningful participation and strengthen the enjoyment of their human rights. It is therefore important to **discuss and assess the remaining challenges and identify any potential shortcomings of the existing human rights protection system for older persons,** as well as shortcomings in the implementation of existing norms, through structured dialogues, including the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing. These are supported by analyses such as the report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the normative standards and obligations under international law in relation to the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons.

We also stress the importance of **collecting and analysing relevant disaggregated data,** that can help target the root causes of age-based discrimination and ageism, working towards a cultural transformation of the way society sees ageing and older persons.

Finally, allow me to conclude with examples of actions at the regional level. Since 2021, all EU member states are invited to develop a National Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Ageing in Public Policies, and the EU is currently working towards a horizontal **Equal Treatment Directive** which covers non-discrimination on all grounds, including age, in essential fields such as education, health care and access to and supply of public goods and services. The European Commission is also going to put forward the **new initiative European Care Strategy**, that will take a life-course perspective to care and touch on its different dimensions, in particular with regard to older persons.

I thank you.