**1. How are human rights of older persons integrated into the work of your ministry, and other frameworks on ageing you work with? Are there any interministerial coordination mechanism on this issue?**

Human rights are for us as Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, one of the cornerstones we build on our work for all age groups and in particular the work for and with older persons. It is important to see and accept the individual person and having a human right based and person-centred approach for instance in care work. We need to acknowledge that older persons as such are a very heterogenous group. We further need to keep in mind that ageing is a process. The way how we age is influenced over the entire life-course. And thus, a good and healthy ageing cannot only be seen from a certain age period on but needs to focus on the entire life-circle of a person. Therefore, we support the approach of mainstreaming ageing as well.

In the German Government we have a regular exchange between all ministries that somehow deal with the topic of ageing and human rights of older persons. This is crucial, to get all the different actors and opinions together and to assure that all share the same understanding and that older persons are not forgotten.

In our international work, we are also very much engaged in the different frameworks on ageing. For Instance, Germany is Bureau member of the UNECE standing working group on ageing in Geneva and actively involved in the work of the OEWGA.

The Federal Government continues to work to identify and close gaps in the human rights protection of older persons. This is why we are also a member of the informal core group created this year with the task to issue a proposal for the installment of a sub working group of the OEWGA to fulfill the mandate of identifying possible gaps for older persons and discussing how to best close them. A decision on the appropriate way of closing identified gaps has not yet been made in the federal government and will be based on the analysis of existing gaps.

However, I want to make it clear: our membership in the informal core-group does neither mean that Germany supports the creation of a new legally binding instrument nor that we are against it. It is important for us to have a really open-ended discussion without predetermination which gaps exist and after agreeing on gaps discuss how best to close them.

However, it is also important for us, that existing norms and standards must not be weakened.

Furthermore, as you know, Germany is very active in the field of human rights and also in the human rights council. This shows: human rights are very important for the German government.

We are convinced that we need to make use of all different instruments on international and national level, e.g. MIPAA and UNECE RIS, the work in OEWGA, the work in the Human Rights Council, the decade of healthy ageing, the Agenda 2030, etc. but also: legal instruments, like CEDAW, CRPD and all Conventions

It is important that discrimination on grounds of age is also checked in the regular review circles of conventions. We know: this is not happening enough – or in many cases it is simply not happening at all! This creates possible gaps in the human rights mechanism. Therefore, we also support the important work of the Independent Expert.

This all shows: Rights on the paper alone are useless – they also have to be lived!

In May 2020, the UN Secretary General published a Policy Brief about „The Impact of COVID-19 on older persons“. He urges „Each of us […] to step up our effort to support older persons“ and to „do everything possible to preserve their rights and dignity at all times.“

Antonio Guterres sees the COVID-19 recovery as „an opportunity to set the stage for a more inclusive, equitable and age-friendly society, anchored in human rights and guided by the shared promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to Leave No One Behind.“

In light of this plea, it is even more important that we also put a special focus on older persons rights.

COVID-19, the current Russian War in Ukraine, the situation of refugees and older persons, violence, ageism, older women, lifelong-learning, autonomy, long term care, housing, participation and others, are challenges that we need to discuss as well against the background of human rights.

The OHCHR “Update to the 2012 Analytical Outcome Study on the normative standards in international human rights law in relation to older persons”, that we co-financed (together with Austria) is a solid base for discussing the topics further.

**2. How can the Human Rights Council (HRC), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the High Commissioner, as custodians of the human rights treaties and mechanisms, help clear concerns that some governments -maybe also yours-may have regarding the standards that a new instrument would be setting? What would you like to see in a future analytical study by OHCHR on the topic?**

Indeed, OHCHR is very helpful and to discuss the topic of the rights of older persons more facts-oriented, we also co-financed (together with Austria) the OHCHR “Update to the 2012 Analytical Outcome Study on the normative standards in international human rights law in relation to older persons”. This study is very helpful for the future work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing and all who are interested in the human rights of older persons.

For me, the question is also that no standards of existing human rights framework and treaty should be lowered by new instruments. How can we ensure that? Maybe a study about that work – if not someone already has answers to that question – would be very helpful for us as member state and I am sure for other member states as well.

I also think, that it is very important that the Human Rights Council keeps discussing the topic of the rights of older persons. I am very thankful for that and I hope this will also be an important issue, for the HRC in the future.

**3. What are the most significant challenges you encounter regarding human rights-based policies and action on ageing?**

For me it is clear: Human rights should be an important base for all policies and action on ageing. However, sometimes this tends to be forgotten. I see it as crucial to strengthen coordinated action for the protection of older persons rights to fight ageism. Action needs to be taken on all different levels: Worldwide, in regions, in member states but also in the community.

And to really fight ageism and make it clear to everyone how important human rights for older persons are, it is crucial to have realistic images of ageing - in contrast to ageist stereotypes – and try to steadily influence the thinking and feeling and attitudes towards older persons.

And we need to fill the UN Decade of healthy ageing with life, to fight ageism in all its forms. The same counts for all other initiatives and commitments like the Agenda 2030 or MIPAA and its Regional Implementation Strategy. We need to make use of all the instruments we have and join forces for the rights of older persons and include the topic for instance also in the Universal Periodic Review as well to strengthen the rights of older persons.

As I said before: The Federal Government continues to work to identify and close gaps in the human rights protection of older persons. A decision on the appropriate instruments has not yet been made in the federal government and is based on the analysis of existing gaps. That is why we are also member of the informal core-group of OEWGA in New York lead by Argentina to work fact based and step by step.

For us it is important to link the work of the Human Rights Council and of OHCHR in Geneva and the work of the OEWGA in New York and to have coordinated processes. I am convinced, that this Multi-Stakeholder meeting will strengthen our work in the OEWGA in New York and that we should continue to align our efforts in all processes.

As a result of that very important and informative meeting, we should also to continue to inform and update the stakeholders, NGO and NHRI towards the 13th meeting of the OEWGA and to demonstrate that we continue the close collaboration between Geneva and New York and also strengthen the work of the OEWGA in New York.

Thus, I propose to have an informal meeting of one or two days in New York together with all stakeholders, civil society, UN Organisations, the Independent Expert and NHRI to continue the efforts to link the work of the core group and other important stakeholders and to align the efforts. Maybe a meeting around the International Day of Older Persons, the 1st of October, would be a perfect symbol to strengthen the work and collaboration.