



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Working Group on Ageing

#### Seventh meeting

Geneva, 20 and 21 November 2014

#### Work of the Bureau

## Report on the sixth meeting of the Bureau of the Working Group on Ageing

### I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of agenda

1. The Bureau meeting took place on 8-9 May 2014 in Valletta (Malta) and was hosted by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity of Malta. The Bureau members from the following member States attended the meeting: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Spain, and Turkey. The representative of Georgia was unable to attend. Three host country representatives including Malta's National Focal Point on Ageing also took part in the meeting. The scientific community was represented by an expert from the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (European Centre Vienna). A representative of the European Federation of Older Persons (EURAG) participated on behalf of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

2. Ms. Erika Winkler, Chair of the Working Group on Ageing (WGA), representative of Austria, chaired the meeting with the assistance of the Vice-Chair, Ms Dorika Seib, representative of Germany.

3. On behalf of the host country, the meeting participants were welcomed by Ms Cynthia Formosa, the National Focal Point on Ageing of Malta. The Chair thanked the host country and opened the meeting. The Bureau adopted the agenda of the meeting.

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## **II. Information on the ageing agenda-relevant outcomes of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission for Social Development and of the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission for Population and Development**

4. The Chair informed the Bureau about the discussions and side events of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSD, February 2014), noting that the predominant topic was the empowerment of people, young and old, and the need to integrate the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development in a balanced manner into the post-2015 development agenda. The current draft for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focuses on 16 areas, including one on health and population dynamics, however, ageing and older persons are not properly addressed in any of them. The Secretariat, the Chair and some WGA members provided their comments to the Sustainable Development Solutions Network during the public consultations on the targets and goals of the post-2015 development agenda. All the comments were published on the website of the network [unsdsn.org](http://unsdsn.org) in late April 2014.

5. The Chair referred to the CSD Resolution E/CN.5/2014/L.3 on Further implementation of the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and how it encourages Member States to narrow gaps between policy and practices in the implementation of MIPAA. She particularly noted the paragraph 23 of the Resolution which recommends that the situation of older persons, including the issues of poverty eradication, social integration, non-discrimination and empowerment, be taken into account in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and be given due consideration in the elaboration of the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. The Chair reminded that it is the responsibility of WGA to mainstream ageing, and especially active ageing, in the United Nations system as well as in national policies. The Chair also referred to a paper “Strategy for mainstreaming Active Ageing in All Policy Fields” she had prepared to be discussed later on during the meeting.

6. The Secretariat gave an overview of the discussions and decisions made within the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission for Population and Development held in New York in April 2014. The session was dedicated to the assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The outcomes of the operational review “ICPD Beyond 2014” in the UNECE region, including the High-level Regional Conference on 1-2 July 2013, organised by the Secretariat together with the regional office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) were acknowledged by several UNECE member States in their statements. At the end of the 47<sup>th</sup> session, the Commission adopted the Resolution, in which it reaffirmed the Programme of Action of ICPD and the key actions for its further implementation. The paragraph 23 of the Resolution is devoted to older persons and states that the Commission “Encourages Governments to ensure that the social integration of older persons and the promotion and protection of their rights form an integral part of development policies at all levels”. The Secretariat noted that, regrettably, the Resolution does not take into account the life course perspective and considers the older persons as a specific separate category of people. It was also mentioned that paragraph 23 omits to stress the importance of the international and regional initiatives in this area. In the general debate during the session, some interventions showed that issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights and older persons remain controversial, since a number of countries consider them to be confined to the private realm of the family.

7. The Secretariat also pointed out that national positions on older persons-related issues often reach various UN Commissions, including the Commission on Population and Development, through different country channels and there seems to be a lack of national

coordination on these cross-cutting matters. It was suggested to better define the functions and coordinating role of National Focal Points on Ageing.

8. During the discussion on the role of National Focal Points and various communications, the Bureau noted that it is important to avoid promulgating the notion of older people as a separate part of the population and to emphasize that ageing affects people of all age groups over the life course, and therefore a wording “as we age” might be better term for usage as a motto.

### **III. Introduction by host-country: keynote addresses and discussion**

9. Hon. Dr Justyne Caruana, Parliamentary Secretary for the Rights of Persons with Disability and Active Ageing welcomed the participants. The Parliamentary Secretary expressed her appreciation of the WGA work and gave an overview of the ageing-related situation in Malta. She stressed that older persons are considered an asset to society, to which they contribute through participation in the labour market, in non-paid activities, etc. The Parliamentary Secretary informed the Bureau about Malta’s recently adopted National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing for 2014–2020. She thanked the Bureau for the discussion on active ageing issues and their work.

10. The National Focal Point on Ageing of Malta, Ms. Cynthia Formosa presented Malta’s National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing for 2014–2020. The Policy includes all four MIPAA goals. The implementation of the Policy is a responsibility of the Active Ageing Unit of the Department for the Elderly and Community Care of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity. The work towards strategy implementation has been recently initiated. It was noted that there is a close cooperation in implementation of the Policy through regular meetings with other ministries.

11. Hon. Dr George W. Vella, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, in his meeting with the Bureau, acknowledged the progress made in international collaboration on ageing within the United Nations framework since the First World Assembly on Ageing in Vienna in 1982 where the topic was elevated to one of international concern. He emphasized that ageing was an important issue to address by Malta given its economic implications. From the foreign affairs point of view he shared experiences about the difficulties of Maltese emigrants who after decades abroad return to their country in old age and find it difficult to reintegrate into a much changed environment. In turn, many Maltese who emigrated after the Second World War have decided to retire abroad. Having preserved their culture while living autonomously in a different country, they often find it challenging to integrate into care institutions that are modelled according to different cultural norms.

### **IV. Progress on implementation of the WGA work programme in 2014**

#### **A. Discussion Groups — the way forward**

12. The Chair opened the floor to exchange about the progress made in the work within the discussion groups. Bureau members expressed concern about the lack of interaction within the groups in between Working Group meetings. The chair Ms Dorika Seib and rapporteur Mr Dirk Jarré of the second discussion group reported about their initiatives to encourage exchange of good practice examples within the group. However, only few examples were received. It was suggested to include good practice examples from other

sources and to prepare an analysis on that basis, asking feedback from WGA members on that report. Another suggestion was to showcase examples from selected countries at each meeting of the WGA. These presentations could be prepared as part of the group work. The Chair stressed the importance of a clear-structured discussion within the groups. The groups should be used actively during the WGA meetings.

## **B. Other programme elements**

### **1. Policy Brief on Innovative and empowering strategies for care**

13. The Secretariat presented the outline of the Policy Brief on Innovative and Empowering Strategies for Care. The Policy Brief will focus on the following questions: moving from passive to active care and from institutional care to home-based services; integration into the local communities; modern policies for informal care; new ways of cooperation between public care services and non-profit as well as private service providers. It was decided to include also a component of comparative analysis of challenges in urban and rural areas. The Secretariat pointed out that the next Policy Brief will focus on issues of dementia. Thanks to the German contribution of EUR 43,000 to the Ageing Trust Fund, the drafting of these policy briefs will be supported by consultants with expertise in the respective fields.

### **2. Road Map on Ageing in Georgia**

14. The Secretariat presented a summary of the first draft of the Road Map on Mainstreaming Ageing for Georgia which had been shared with the Georgian government prior to the meeting. Bureau members commended the Secretariat on the work and agreed to send their comments on the Road Map by 31 May 2014.

### **3. Active Ageing Index — the second phase of the project**

15. The Secretariat presented an overview of the second phase of the Active Ageing Index (AAI) project. This includes: research continuation, outreach to stakeholders and communication activities. The further research implies geographical extension of the index in order to cover a new European Union Member Country — Croatia, as well as Canada, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland; AAI retrospective calculation for the period 2007/2008; calculation of the next wave of AAI for 2015. The pilot studies of the index for two UNECE non-EU countries (Serbia and Turkey) are also included in the further research activities. The preliminary results of the pilot study for Turkey were presented to the Bureau. The Bureau was informed about some countries' initiative to use AAI as an instrument for the policy impact analysis at a subnational level. The latter requires in-depth work on adaptation of the index to a subnational level analysis to respond to the lack of data necessary to compute the AAI indicators.

16. Poland's representative presented her country's experience in using AAI at a regional (subnational) level.<sup>1</sup> The Bureau was informed about the Social 'Open Method of Coordination' Peer Review on AAI that will take place in Krakow, Poland, on 15–16 October 2014.

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed results see [http://senior.gov.pl/source/PL\\_Regional\\_AAI.pdf](http://senior.gov.pl/source/PL_Regional_AAI.pdf).

17. The Chair noted the importance of countries' initiative to apply AAI for the analysis at the subnational level. This might be a starting point for using AAI as a monitoring tool for MIPAA/RIS implementation. It was mentioned that if the countries accept using AAI for national reporting the National Statistical Offices may be asked to provide data on indicators for the calculation of the index on regular basis. The Secretariat emphasized that if AAI is to be applied by countries for subnational analysis the index can be more flexible: for instance, the proxies could be used to replace prescribed indicators that are unavailable at subnational level. Such AAI, clearly, will not be used for international comparison.

## **V. Ways for the Working Group on Ageing to contribute to the discussion on the United Nations post-2015 development agenda**

18. The Sustainable Development Goals will be discussed at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2014, and the final report will be prepared by the end of 2014. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that efforts to promote the inclusion of ageing and life course perspectives into the post-2015 development agenda should be taken by July 2014 when the ECOSOC meeting will be held. It was agreed that the Chair, the Vice-Chair and the Secretariat will draft a proposal based on the text of the Vienna Ministerial Declaration. This proposal will be sent to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs on behalf of WGA, but also to the WGA members so that they can transfer the proposal to their governments. The deadline to prepare and send the proposal was set to 16 May 2014.

## **VI. First discussion on the preparation of the guidelines for the national reports on the third cycle of MIPAA/RIS implementation**

19. The Bureau discussed the possible structure and requirements of the national reports on the third cycle of MIPAA/RIS implementation that are to be reflected in the guidelines for the national report preparation. It was decided to structure reporting around the four main themes of the Vienna Ministerial Declaration to simplify it and make it more coherent. In addition, the guidelines could offer a list of possible subtopics under each goal for reporting, making clear that the countries do not have to report on each item but can focus on those they consider important and/or challenging. Countries could also include emerging issues into a concluding part of the report. The discussion groups of the Working Group should provide input to the guidelines for their respective themes.

20. The Chair suggested creating a network or a task force at national level to hold a conference or meeting in preparation of the national report on implementation of MIPAAA/RIS. The National Focal Point should be provided with recommendations and suggestions for using such a participatory approach in gathering information for the preparation of the report in a bottom-up approach. Bureau members suggested that this would not be feasible in all countries, as National Focal Points may not have sufficient authority over other ministries to ensure their engagement in the process. However, member States should be reminded of the requirement of following a participatory approach when preparing national reports. Therefore guidelines for reporting should be sent out early enough to allow the organization of the participatory process at country level.

21. The Chair reminded about the necessity to agree on preliminary dates for the Ministerial Conference in 2017 and to decide on the deadline for reporting. Bureau members were invited to submit information on preferred dates and Turkey agreed to

explore availabilities and inform about suggested dates from the host country's point of view.

22. The Chair suggested "Further implementation of MIPAA: empowerment of all ages to enforce active ageing in the life course" as a theme of the third cycle. The Secretariat proposed linking the third cycle theme, if appropriate, to a UN designated International or a European Year 2017 theme. It was suggested to have electronic consultations on the theme. The Bureau agreed to further discuss about the dates and theme during the 7<sup>th</sup> WGA meeting.

## **VII. Agenda of the seventh meeting of the Working Group on Ageing**

23. The Bureau agreed on a proposed provisional agenda for the Seventh meeting of WGA to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 20-21 November 2014 with the following amendments:

(a) To add an additional Item after item 6 on "Countries' experience" where Poland will report on the AAI Peer Review process. Spain expects to be able to present a paper currently being drafted regarding the status of older persons, taking into account the guidelines of the EU Council for Active Ageing. Malta and Poland will present the active ageing policy and first achievements in its implementation.

(b) Under Item 7 (a) of the draft agenda (to be changed into item 8 (a) following the amendment of the previous paragraph) which reads "Main elements of the WGA work programme for 2015", an item (iii) "Ministerial Conference 2017" will be added to focus on the discussion of a title and topics for the Conference. Under this item, one hour will be reserved for work within the discussion groups, asking participants to reflect about the practicalities of reporting about the third review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS and the organization of the Ministerial Conference. Another part of the work in the discussion groups should be devoted to good practices from countries.

## **VIII. Other business**

24. The Bureau discussed possible country candidates to be invited as a new Bureau member replacing the previous Maltese National Focal Point. It was decided that the Secretariat will send a general call inviting expressions of interest.

## **IX. Summary and closing of the meeting**

25. A brief ad-hoc Bureau meeting will be organised in the morning on 20 November 2014. The Seventh Bureau meeting will take place in May 2015. The representative of Poland will explore possibilities to host it. Turkey will consider hosting the Bureau meeting in 2016. Both countries will confirm their availabilities by November 2014, informing WGA members at their annual meeting.