

Jean-Claude JUNCKER  
President of the European Commission

**Re: Annual Growth Survey 2016 – Socio-economic rights of ageing populations are at stake!**

1 September 2015

Dear President,

Ahead of the publication of the Annual Growth Survey 2016, AGE Platform Europe (AGE) and our member organisations are calling on you, as Commission President, **to recognise the complexity of social realities faced by older people and, in response, to strengthen their socio-economic rights through the European Semester 2016.**

Although the European Charter of Fundamental Rights declares the rights of older people to live a life of dignity and independence, the **pressure on public budgets through the European Semester reforms are increasing the risk of human rights violations against older persons.** The vulnerability of many older people is first of all related to their lack of financial resources. The disposable income of older people is decreasing as they have to spend more money 'out of their pocket' on various services e.g. health or long-term care, transport, etc. that used to be provided for free or highly subsidized.

Apart from the erosion of their income, **inequalities among people aged 65+ persist** e.g. concentration of poverty among women, older migrants or persons with disabilities. Cutbacks in public expenditure hamper the equal access to and the quality of social services including health and long-term care. Finally, older people do still face age discrimination in employment, which undermines Commission's recommendations to prolong working life as part of pension reforms.

AGE invites the European Commission to consider its findings and recommendations from **the present assessment of the 2015 National Reform Programmes and the**

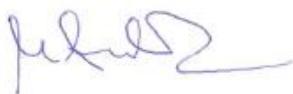


**Commission's Country-Specific Recommendations.** With this work developed with the input of our members and experts, we would like to help the Commission services to better understand the specificity of the impact the crisis has on older people and its connection to the respect of their human rights. The priorities voiced by our members in the present document also guide you towards areas where social investment is badly needed, as it will have multiple returns: on the well-being of citizens, on jobs and employment, and ultimately on avoided long-term costs, such as in the health sector where a lack of investment leads to a decrease in the indicator on healthy life expectancy.

We hope that the extensive feedback provided by older people's organisations across the EU will also help the College of Commissioners to continue its reflexion on the new EU social agenda and the place of social investment. Taking the momentum of the review of the Europe 2020 Strategy, AGE reiterates its call to make the 2016 European Semester a key instrument to achieve a more social and fairer EU.

We look forward to hearing from you and continuing dialogue on ageing issues and in particular on how best safeguard older people's quality of life and dignity through a better coordination among economic and social policies.

Yours sincerely,



Marjan Sedmak  
President



Anne-Sophie Parent  
Secretary General

CC. **Frans Timmermans** First Vice-President, responsible for Better Regulation, Inter-institutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental  
**Věra Jourová Justice**, Commissioner Consumers and Gender Equality  
**Marianne Thyssen**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility  
**Pierre Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs  
**Valdis Dombrovskis**, Commissioner for Euro & Social Dialogue

