

Resolution 2592 (2025)¹

Overcoming age-based discrimination against older persons

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Human rights should not be denied or reduced with age. As established in international human rights treaties, they are universal and must therefore apply equally to everyone. Older persons should have the rights, resources and facilities allowing them to remain full members of society, on the basis of the principles of autonomy, equality, independence, participation and respect for every person's dignity.
2. Ageism – defined as stereotypes, prejudice and discriminatory practices on the basis of age – reinforces the perception that inequalities and discrimination against older persons are natural or inevitable, which is not the case. Older persons have to face a discourse drawing attention to the consequences of a demographic shift towards an older population, the growing “burden” they represent and the “high cost” of ensuring their equality of human rights.
3. Age-based discrimination is as harmful as any other form of discrimination. Older persons experience age-based discrimination in all areas of life, especially in the workplace, and in access to services, education and healthcare.
4. A less protective legal framework on and in response to age-based discrimination, in comparison with other grounds for discrimination, is not justified and should be remedied. Alongside robust legislation prohibiting discrimination on grounds of age in all areas of life, a wide range of measures should be put in place to combat ageism in society.
5. Older persons are not a homogeneous group, and it is important to apply an intersectional approach to prevent and combat the ageism and the discrimination they encounter.
6. The negative narrative around age and ageing in society needs to be challenged and changed in order to counter age-based stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. Ageism as a socially acceptable phenomenon should be challenged through a range of channels, including awareness-raising measures, improved legislation and policies, education, intergenerational interventions and research and data collection on its manifestations and effects, including an analysis of intersectional discrimination affecting older persons (migrants, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons, women, persons with disabilities, persons with an ethnic minority background, etc.).
7. The Parliamentary Assembly underlines the need to meet Target 10.2 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aims to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, “irrespective of age” and other characteristics, by 2030. In addition to SDG 10 (reduce inequality), other SDGs are relevant for older persons: SDG 3 (ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages), SDG 1 (end poverty), SDG 5 (achieve gender equality) and SDG 8 (promote sustained economic growth, full employment and decent work for all).
8. The Assembly welcomes the Pact for the Future, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2024, and its call to promote intergenerational solidarity, dialogue and engagement, including with and among children, youth and older persons, in policy and decision-making processes.

1. *Assembly debate* on 31 January 2025 (9th sitting) (see [Doc. 16091](#), report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Ms Andrea Eder-Gitschthaler). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 31 January 2025 (9th sitting). See also [Recommendation 2291 \(2025\)](#).



9. The Assembly refers to Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the promotion of human rights of older persons and a 2019 report on its implementation which recommended further efforts to tackle age-based discrimination.

10. The Assembly furthermore refers to its [Resolution 2168 \(2017\)](#) and [Recommendation 2104 \(2017\)](#) “Human rights of older persons and their comprehensive care”; [Resolution 2510 \(2023\)](#) “Closing the digital divide: promoting equal access to digital technologies”; [Resolution 1793 \(2011\)](#) “Promoting active ageing – capitalising on older people’s working potential”; and [Recommendation 1796 \(2007\)](#) “The situation of elderly persons in Europe”. It also refers to [Resolution 504 \(2024\)](#) and [Recommendation 517 \(2024\)](#) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe “Ageing communities – Ensuring access to quality social care for older persons”.

11. The Assembly acknowledges the pioneering role played by the Council of Europe, given that the European Social Charter (ETS No. 35, “the Charter”), revised in 1996 (ETS No. 163, “the revised Charter”), and in particular its Article 23 “The right of elderly persons to social protection”, is the first human rights treaty to specifically protect the rights of older persons, requiring States parties to adopt legislation to combat age-based discrimination in all areas. The revised Charter states that such legislation should cover sectors such as access to goods, facilities and services, including insurance and banking products. In a statement from 2023, the European Committee of Social Rights indicated that the revised Charter requires a commitment from the States parties to identify and eliminate ageist attitudes and laws, policies and other measures which reflect or reinforce ageism. In 2021, the Council of Europe published a major study on the use of the European Social Charter in combating ageism against older persons in order to ensure that the Charter remains at the forefront of this fight.

12. The Assembly considers that national bodies responsible for equality issues should include preventing and combating discrimination against older persons in their mandate and activities and be granted the necessary resources in this respect.

13. The Assembly calls on the member and observer States of the Council of Europe and States whose parliaments enjoy observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly:

13.1. with regard to the general approach, to:

13.1.1. apply a human rights-based approach to combat ageism against older persons, shifting to a right holders model that guarantees equality, dignity, autonomy and participation at all stages of life;

13.1.2. accordingly devise and put in place specific measures to prevent ageism and combat stereotypes against older persons, through education, information and awareness-raising activities, which could include events to mark the International Day of Older Persons (1 October);

13.1.3. support and fund civil society organisations working to combat ageism;

13.1.4. provide opportunities for intergenerational solidarity and partnerships, and propose activities to connect younger and older generations, for the benefit of all, harnessing the wisdom, experience and talents of the older generation, as a societal asset;

13.2. with regard to laws and policies, to:

13.2.1. review legislation to include a specific prohibition of age-based discrimination against older persons, and modify or repeal any laws with direct or indirect discriminatory effects;

13.2.2. ensure that equality and anti-discrimination laws and policies address structural discrimination and multiple and intersectional discrimination against older persons in all areas of life, covering in particular autonomy (legal capacity), independent living, employment, political representation, access to justice, goods and services, healthcare, housing and quality care;

13.2.3. accept Article 23 of the revised European Social Charter if this is not already the case;

13.2.4. ensure that monitoring and enforcement bodies and mechanisms are in place as regards laws and policies on age-based discrimination against older persons;

13.2.5. consider establishing an independent commissioner and/or a minister for the rights of older persons;

13.3. with regard to social care and healthcare, to:

13.3.1. ensure that the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of age is integrated in healthcare and other public policies and programmes;

13.3.2. ensure that implicit and explicit bias and ageism are eliminated in the design, development, use and evaluations of artificial intelligence technologies in the fields of healthcare and social care;

13.3.3. support and build the knowledge and capacities of healthcare and social care professionals about the perspective, experience and needs of different groups of older persons, including women, LGBTI persons, persons with disabilities, persons with an ethnic minority background and migrants;

13.3.4. grant access to affordable and quality institutional long-term care;

13.4. with regard to access to information, redress and justice, to:

13.4.1. ensure that older persons have full and easily accessible information about their rights and redress mechanisms;

13.4.2. establish appropriate redress mechanisms and support the access of older persons to justice, including through the provision of free legal aid and appropriate legal proceedings;

13.4.3. support the work of equality bodies and ensure their ability to receive and bring forward complaints concerning age-based discrimination against older persons;

13.4.4. raise awareness among and provide training for relevant staff on this area of discrimination, for example through the Council of Europe Programme on Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP);

13.5. with regard to data collection and research, as a tool to measure the situation and inform policy making, to:

13.5.1. review data collection approaches to eliminate any inherent age bias and collect equality data disaggregated by different age sub-groups alongside other characteristics, without age limits, such as sex, gender, disability, ethnic minority, migrant background, sexual orientation and gender identity, allowing for an analysis of age discrimination as a phenomenon in itself as well as its interaction with other factors;

13.5.2. conduct quantitative and qualitative research into intersectional discrimination affecting older persons, including women, LGBTI persons, migrants, persons with an ethnic minority background or persons with disabilities;

13.6. with regard to digitalisation and access to goods and services, to:

13.6.1. combat the digital divide which may affect older persons, by providing universal and affordable access to relevant tools and technologies, along with tailored capacity building and empowerment among the older members of society, to allow for their meaningful and safe use of information and communication technologies and digital services, in line with the United Nations General Assembly Global Digital Compact;

13.6.2. ensure that public services, especially relating to financial and other essential support, can be accessed through both online and offline means;

13.6.3. ensure that implicit and explicit bias and ageism are identified and avoided throughout the design and use of artificial intelligence technologies applied to public goods and services;

13.7. with regard to the participation of older persons in the decisions that concern them, to:

13.7.1. put in place the necessary and appropriate methods and mechanisms to allow older persons to exercise their full legal capacity, autonomy and voice in all matters affecting them as individuals;

13.7.2. actively seek the involvement of older persons and their representative organisations when considering and reviewing legal and policy measures which affect them and their rights.

14. The Assembly supports the United Nations Decade for Healthy Ageing (2021-2030) and encourages Council of Europe member States to address ageism with specific measures aiming to make tangible progress by the end of the decade. It thus invites member States to work towards the elimination of ageism

and actively participate in the World Health Organization's Global Campaign to Combat Ageism. The Assembly supports, moreover, the consideration of a United Nations convention on the rights of older persons.