**On the road to age equality**

Rights areas:

* [Support for human rights systems and defenders](https://fra.europa.eu/en/taxonomy/term/989)



If you are old, chances are you have been discriminated against. It is so common in fact that, across the EU, over 40% of Europeans feel that discrimination towards older people is widespread in their country. Marking International Day for Older People, FRA calls on EU institutions and Member States to fully respect the rights of older people.

Europe’s ageing population is getting bigger. By 2080, Eurostat estimates that the over 65s will make up nearly 30% of the EU’s population – an issue that society cannot afford to ignore.

But, despite this, nearly 60% of Europeans consider being old a disadvantage when looking for work.

Too often, society views older people as a burden. It fails to recognise their contribution to families, communities and wider society, as carers for younger family members, as mentors, and as volunteers within our communities.

Society seems to forget that everyone will eventually reach that age.

EU institutions and Member States should act now to lay the groundwork for older people today and in the future. They need to change the prevailing mindset that views older people as a burden on society, and recognise the valuable contribution they make to society.

By respecting their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, we ultimately support truly inclusive and sustainable societies.

The incoming European Commission has signalled its aim to launch a wide debate on the long-term effects of ageing. It also promises to strengthen Europe’s commitment to inclusion and equality in all of its senses, including age. Part of this involves raising awareness, promoting equality and fighting discrimination wherever it exists.

The European Pillar of Social Rights is yet another milestone. The adoption of the EU’s Work-Life Balance Directive earlier this year was another positive step. It should lead to more respectful tailor-made and home-centred care for older people. Such work should continue to further strengthen social rights protection across the EU.

Unblocking the Equal Treatment Directive should be a priority. This would extend protection against discrimination based on various grounds, including age, to areas that particularly matter to older people - access to goods and services, social protection, healthcare and housing.

In 2018, FRA focused on the [shift towards a rights-based approach to ageing](https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/frr-2018-focus-rights-based-ageing).

It will continue to look at [ageism and promote a rights-based approach](https://fra.europa.eu/en/video/2019/video-blog-michael-oflaherty-ageism). It stands ready to assist the new European Commission and Parliament in progressing towards age equality.