

## Old Grey Matter article for publication Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June in the EADT

### Voicing the Treatment of Ageing

The 'A Pensioners Manifesto' highlighted last month, is the National Pensioners' Convention's contribution to the present ongoing debate on the place of senior citizens in our society. It can be seen in full on the NPC website at [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org) and was fully debated by around 500 people and accepted as our ongoing needs document at the NPC's Blackpool Parliament. The Manifesto was also reinforced by the conclusions of the annual conference of AGE Platform Europe, a European network of organisations of and for people aged 50+ held simultaneously in Brussels. One outcome of both conferences was that older people together with their organisations need to stand together to combat the persisting ageism and age discrimination, and to enhance social justice within and between generations. Ageism is the systematic discrimination of persons on age grounds. Its various forms range from stereotypes, prejudices to mistreatment and abuse. It is widespread and found to be a major obstacle to inclusion and equal participation of older persons in society.

In its conclusions, AGE Platform Europe's conference of around 100 representatives of older people's organisations, European institutions, academia and civil society pledged in favour of strengthening the protection of older persons under human rights law. While historically neglected, older persons deserve legal protection enjoyed by any other population or age group and their rights should be realised and enforced in Europe and globally. Moreover, "The enjoyment of human rights can't be achieved without a strong legal instrument as well as strong political will and social activism", insisted Anne-Sophie Parent, AGE Secretary-General. This statement backs up the NPC Manifesto's fifth point about the protection of the elderly in its dignity code.

AGE Europe say Action needs now to be taken at national and EU levels to ensure the effective implementation of existing legislations as the EU Equal Treatment Directive on employment, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities or policy instruments as the Madrid Action Plan on Ageing - MIPAA, and to consider the opportunity for further legal instruments specifically addressing older persons, such as a new United Nations (UN) treaty.

The newly elected AGE President, Ebbe Johansen, DaneAge – Aeldresagen (DK), called for joint efforts within the older people's movement to take an active part in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. "We support the Pillar and want it to translate into practising the rights to affordable and quality health and long-term care, but also to adequate pensions and minimum old-age income so that people can age in dignity" he concluded – a suitable subject for Brexit negotiations I would add!

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