

CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSION AT THE UNECE WORKSHOP "Making participation meaningful: bringing governments and civil society together", 21.4.2021

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**Why** I believe that a reminder of the commitments made is appropriate, as the situation is deteriorating as a result of the epidemic. The implementation of commitments remains in the shadow of current needs and challenges. At the moment, those common forms of work that we have already designed in the past years are also somewhat in the background. For example: In Slovenia, representatives of government departments with participation of non- government organizations (our federation was involved), we together prepared the Active Ageing Strategy, which was adopted by the government in 2017. An action plan for implementation has been prepared which has not yet been adopted due to changes in governments. The Council for Aging and Intergenerational Cooperation was formed at the Government, where I am a member - it is not functioning now. All such mechanisms are now standing and waiting for "better times".

**Advantages** Civil society organizations are close to the people and their conditions in everyday life because of their membership and organized functioning. They can significantly improve the preparation of normative acts and others solutions by providing information about needs, as well as increasing the reality of identification results or effects. The need for state intervention to mitigate the consequences of the epidemic makes it difficult to keep up with other people's needs, often it is even not enough time to involve civil society, although we are aware that this would be productive. Exceptions are more individual experts who are aware of the importance of cooperation and thus they act.

**Obstacles** Based on my practice, the obstacle to better participation is inadequate communication between actors, carriers of different types of regulatory acts in preparation and social groups to which the regulation applies. Opportunities for cooperation are usually given too late, when the adoption process is already at such a stage that it is very difficult to achieve change. However, the representatives of the non-governmental side are often, due to voluntary membership, not skilled enough to get involved in the events at the right time and in a right way. It is not easy to acquire members or staff with appropriate competencies to be a credible interlocutor for professional crews in government departments and various administrative bodies.

**The practice** In our federation we discuss all legislative and other documents proposals in the process at the state level, that have an impact on the situation of older people and related international documents. We also monitor their implementation and contribute to the implementation reports. The same goes for the materials of international organizations of which we are members. We contribute reports and assessments of the situation of older people as a result of the implementation of the commitments made. Our organisation is proactive and we are also experiencing a response from the competent decision makers – we are heard. In 2018,

our federation adopted the Memorandum 2018, with a series of proposals for the regulation of areas that are also the subject of MIPAA commitments. In the period since the last reporting on the implementation of the MIPAA, we have established a body of permanent coordination with youth organizations, which works well. We have formed a coordination of organizations of older people too. But here we are less successful. In addition to contacts with the responsible government authorities, we also maintain cooperation with MEPs.