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— Rome 15-17 June 2022

UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing 2022
Rome, 15 -17 June 2022

Elena Bonetti



Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family of Italy

Ms. Elena Bonetti is Associate Professor of Mathematical Analysis at the University of Milan. Graduated in Mathematics in 1997 at the University of Pavia, in 2002 Ms. Bonetti obtained a PhD in Mathematics at the University of Milan. She is committed to the Scout Movement and has experiences in the field of education and youth. On 5 September 2019, Ms. Bonetti was appointed as Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family by the President of the Italian Republic. She was re-appointed as Minister in the Cabinet of President Mario Draghi on 13 February 2021.

Zsuzsanna Jakab



Deputy Director-General of WHO

Zsuzsanna Jakab, a native of Hungary, was appointed Deputy Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2019, after having served as WHO Regional Director for the European Region for nine years. The Deputy Director-General's portfolio includes WHO's technical programmes for universal health coverage, the life course, communicable and noncommunicable diseases, healthier populations and antimicrobial resistance, alongside other programmes.

Dr. Jakab has held a number of high-profile national and international public health policy positions in the last three decades. She served as the founding Director of the European Union's European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in Stockholm, Sweden. Between 2005 and 2010, she built ECDC into an internationally respected centre of excellence in the fight against infectious diseases. Between 2002 and 2005, Dr. Jakab was State Secretary at the Hungarian Ministry of Health, Social and Family Affairs. Between 1991 and 2002, she worked at the WHO Regional Office for Europe in a range of senior management roles.

Olga Algayerova



Executive Secretary of UNECE

Olga Algayerova is the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission. She is currently Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the International Organizations in Vienna, Austria (since 2012). She was previously President, Slovak Millennium Development Goals (2010-2012); State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2006-2010) and Corporate Export Manager, Zentiva International, a.s. (2004-2006).

Born in 1959, Ms. Algayerova holds a Master in Contemporary Diplomacy from Malta University, a Master in Business Administration from The Open University Business School, United Kingdom and a Dipl. in Engineer of Economy from the University of Economics Business Faculty, Bratislava.



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Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich



Chief of Population Unit, UNECE

Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich is the chief of Population Unit of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and is responsible for the UNECE work in the area of population ageing and intergenerational relations. She coordinates activities of the UNECE Working Group on Ageing and oversees the organization of the reviews of national policies and strategies in implementing the Madrid International Plan of Actions on Ageing in the UNECE region, capacity development and publication of policy briefs in the area of population ageing. She also acts as the UNECE coordinator for the Generations and Gender programme. In addition, she leads UNECE activities related to the review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of International Conference on Population and Development. Ms. Gaucaite Wittich has a doctoral degree in Social sciences and before joining UNECE was an Associate Professor of Economics at Vilnius University in Lithuania.

Alexandre Sidorenko



Senior Advisor, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research

Dr. Alexandre Sidorenko is an expert in national and international policy on ageing. His current assignments and duties: Senior Advisor, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (Vienna, Austria); International Tutor, International Institute on Ageing (United Nations-Malta); Member, HelpAge International Board of Trustees (London, United Kingdom); Member, Societal Advisory Board for the Joint Programming Initiative More years, better lives (European Union).

Previously, he served as the Chief of the Population Unit, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva, Switzerland, 2010); Head of the United Nations Programme on Ageing (Vienna – New York, 1988-2009). Within the United Nations, he acted as Coordinator of the International Year of Older Persons (1999). He also coordinated substantive preparations of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, including drafting the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, and the global follow-up activities of the Assembly.

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Norah Keating



Director, Global Social Issues on Ageing, International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics

Norah Keating is a social gerontologist whose theoretical and empirical research has created evidence, challenged discourses and influenced policy in global, social and community contexts and life courses of ageing. In 2017 she was awarded the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics Presidential Award for the global reach of her international work.

Professor Keating holds academic appointments in three world regions: University of Alberta, Canada; Swansea University, UK; North-west University, South Africa. She is a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences; the Academy of Social Sciences (UK) and the Gerontological Society of America (US) and is a Director of the Vanier Institute of the Family (Canada).

She is scientific advisor to research programmes on family care, the care economy and community contexts of ageing in South-East Asia, North America, Europe, CESW Africa and Latin America. She is advisor to the Pan American Health Organization on the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing. In her recent publication on a research framework on the UN Decade (<https://rdcu.be/cETct>) she sets out the social justice and theoretical imperatives for knowledge creation and policy directions for the Decade.

Christie Morreale



Vice-President of the Walloon Government, Minister for Employment, Training, Health, Social Action, Equal Opportunities and Women's Rights

Christie Morreale is Vice-President of the Walloon Government, Minister for Employment, Training, Health, Social Action, Equal Opportunities and Women's Rights. Her main focuses are environment, economy, and gender equality.

From 2000 to 2003, she was an expert on gender equality issues and interior/justice issues in the office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Employment, Labour and Equal Opportunities. She served as the justice adviser in the office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Justice between 2003 and 2005. From 2005 to 2009, she was the Home Affairs Advisor in the office of the Walloon Minister of Home Affairs and the Civil Service. From 2009 to 2010, she worked as the head of the equal opportunities unit in the office of the Walloon Minister of Social Affairs, Health and Equal Opportunities. Since 2014, she has been a member of the Walloon Parliament. In 2019, she was appointed as Vice-President of the Walloon Government, Minister for Employment, Training, Health, Social Action, Equal Opportunities and Women's Rights.

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Dan Juvan



State Secretary of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of Slovenia

Dan Juvan was born and raised in Ljubljana. In 2016, he graduated in Sociology and Philosophy at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana and is a professor of Sociology and Philosophy. He has been active in politics since 2015 and is a member of the political party Levica (the Left). He worked as a parliamentary aide for Levica's Parliamentary team, especially in the field of labour, student labour, minimum wage policies and the care for older persons. He is currently the State Secretary at the Slovenian Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

Kiran Rabheru



Chair of the Steering Group of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People (GAROP)

Dr. Kiran Rabheru is Full Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Ottawa and Geriatric Psychiatrist at The Ottawa Hospital (TOH). He obtained his MD from University of Western Ontario and practiced in rural and urban settings as a family physician for several years. He is a Certificant and Fellow of the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CCFP, FCFP). He went on to a subspecialize in geriatric psychiatry in Canada (FRCP) and the United States (DABPN) and is honoured to be a Founding member of the subspecialty of Geriatric Psychiatry in Canada. He is a recipient of the Outstanding Achievements in Geriatric Psychiatry in Canada award by the Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry. Dr. Rabheru is passionate and committed to serving the older persons, and is active in promoting healthy aging, brain resilience and vitality for which he is recognized nationally and internationally. Dr. Rabheru is past president and a long-time member of the CAGP board. He co-leads the Canadian Coalition of Seniors Mental Health, Chairs the Board of the International Longevity Centre of Canada and serves as a Board member and Chair of the Advocacy Committee of the International Psychogeriatric Association and as well as Chair of the Section of Positive Psychiatry of the World Psychiatric Association.

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Arno Elmer



Managing Director, BeHome, Germany

Prof. Dr. Arno Elmer, LL.M., is Founder and CEO of the Better@Home Service GmbH (BeHome), Berlin. BeHome supports elderly people to stay at home as long as possible, using Sensors, Software and a wide range of services like telemedicine, emergency call solutions, videocommunication tools etc. BeHome is realizing several projects in Germany with partners from the Real Estate Industry, Welfare and Care Organizations, cities and communities etc.

Before founding BeHome Arno Elmer was CEO of the gematik, the company that builds the telematic infrastructure for the whole German healthcare system. He can look back on more than 20 years of management experience in different business sectors e.g. in Real Estate, Consumer Electronics, E-Commerce, Retail and manufacturing industry.

Arno Elmer owns Diplomas in Economics, Informatics, a Master of Laws degree and a Doctor title in Health sciences. Since 2010 he is teaching at the FOM University of Applied Sciences in Berlin. His main research is on digital health, health economy and marketing strategy. He is member in several advisory boards and publisher of books like The Transformation of Health and Care.

Francesca Colombo



Head of the Health Division, OECD

Francesca Colombo, M.Sc., is Head of the Health Division at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. She oversees OECD work on health, which aims at providing internationally comparable data on health systems and applying economic analysis to health policies, advising policy makers, stakeholders and citizens on how to respond to demands for more and better health care and make health systems more people centred. Major activities of the OECD Health Division cover the response to the COVID-19 crisis and solutions to make health systems more resilient:

trends in health spending; measuring of health care outcomes, activities and inputs; health care quality policies; assessing health system efficiency and value for money; health workforce; long-term care systems and ageing; the economics of public health; pharmaceutical policies, new technologies, big data and Artificial Intelligence in health. Mrs Colombo has over 25 years of experience leading international activities on health and health systems. Over her career, she travelled extensively in Europe, South America and Asia, advising governments on health system policies and reforms.

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Ernst van Koesveld



Vice-minister for Long Term Care at the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport of the Netherlands

Ernst van Koesveld (49) is Vice-minister for Long-term Care at the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Netherlands. His fields of responsibility include care and support for children and young people, the elderly and persons with disabilities as well as institutional, financial and labour market issues in the health care system. Before, he was director Health Insurance. The Dutch health system typically combines private responsibilities with public guarantees and rules. The major challenge for all stakeholders is to promote and achieve people-centred, integrated care (“the right at the right place”).

Prior to working for the ministry of health, welfare and sport, Ernst van Koesveld held various positions at the ministry of finance, dealing with international decision-making (IMF and the World Bank), budgetary policy issues and structural reforms (social security, labour market, housing, pensions, taxation and decentralization, 2001-2014). He also worked for the UN Development Program in Lithuania and Vietnam, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Erasmus University Rotterdam. His educational background is in economics.

Vincenzo Paglia



President of the Commission for the reform of Healthcare and Socio-medical assistance for the Older Population of Italy

In 2020, Mons. Vincenzo Paglia was appointed as the President of the Commission for the reform of healthcare and social and health care for the elderly population by the Minister of Health of Italy. Mons. Vincenzo Paglia obtained a degree in theology from the Lateran University, where he also obtained a license in philosophy. He also obtained a degree in pedagogy at the University of Urbino.

He was ordained as a priest in 1970 in Rome, and he was an assistant pastor from 1970 to 1973. He was subsequently Rector of the Church of Sant'Egidio in Trastevere. From 1981 to 2000 he was parish priest in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere and prefect of the third prefecture of Rome. From 2004 to 2009, he was President of the Ecumenism and Dialogue Commission of the Italian Episcopal Conference and from 2009 to 2012 he was President of the Umbrian Episcopal Conference. At the Umbrian Episcopal Conference he was also President of the Council for social problems, labour, justice and peace, President of the Commission for Cultural Heritage and President of the Commission for Culture and Social Communications.

He is currently the President of the Pontifical Academy for Life and the Chancellor of the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family studies.

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Claudia Mahler



UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons

Claudia Mahler assumed her role as Independent Expert in May 2020. She is a senior researcher in the field of economic, social and cultural rights for the German Institute for Human Rights since 2010. She was also a visiting professor at the Alice Salomon Hochschule in 2020-2021.

From 2001 to 2009, Ms. Mahler conducted research at the Human Rights Centre of the University of Potsdam where her main fields were in human rights education, minority rights and the law of asylum. In 2000, she was appointed as Vice President of the Human Rights Commission for Tyrol and Vorarlberg.

She has also worked as a lecturer in the field of human rights law and as a consultant to OHCHR in Geneva. From 1997-2001, she held the position of an assistant at the Leopold-Franzens-University Innsbruck, Austria in the field of Criminal Law and Criminal Procedures. Ms. Mahler received her doctoral degree in 2000.

Maria Petkova



Director, Tulip Foundation, Bulgaria

Maria Petkova has been the Director of Tulip Foundation since the establishment of the organisation in 2004. Before, she was the coordinator of the Cooperating Netherlands Foundation's programme for Central and Eastern Europe in Bulgaria. She worked as a consultant at the World Bank Institute in Washington DC, programme coordinator at Open Society Foundation, and as expert at the Office of the President and the Office of the Vice-President of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Maria Petkova has extensive experience in NGO management, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes; children's rights; social development; international partnership; strategic planning; organisational development; social impacts analysis etc. Over the last years she has been an active member of AGE Platform Europe, OWN Europe, EU FGC network, COFACE Families Europe and other professional and civil networks.

She was awarded the title Knight of the Order of Orange-Nassau by a Decree of Her Majesty the Queen of Netherlands for special services in activities dedicated to society, for encouraging and supporting others in 2007.

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Stecy Yghemonos



Director, Eurocarers

Stecy Yghemonos is the Executive Director of Eurocarers, the European association working for carers. A trained journalist, Mr. Yghemonos is an EU policy and communication specialist.

Together with the Eurocarers Steering Committee, he sets the direction of the Eurocarers network, develops and oversees the implementation of the action plan. He is also responsible for the Eurocarers secretariat in Brussels as well as for its activities in the fields of network development, project management, fund raising, policy influencing, advocacy and communications.

Mr. Yghemonos has extensive experience in business development, and project design and management, and has worked in the social and health fields for more than 13 years. Previously, he managed a not-for-profit organisation which fostered learning between countries to improve health and tackle health inequalities, particularly through action on the social determinants of health. He built up the portfolio of work, including in the framework of the EU Employment and Social Investment (EaSI) programme, to develop and lead several initiatives which brought together partners and stakeholders to improve health. He has worked with several EU institutions, the World Health Organization and civil society.

Edmundo Martinho



Chair of the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing

Edmundo Martinho chairs the UNECE Working Group on Ageing. He has been the provider of Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa since November 2017, after having been deputy provider between March 2016 and November 2017.

He has a degree in Social Work from the Instituto Superior de Serviço Social de Lisboa, a postgraduate degree in Project Management and Doctor Honoris Causa by the Lusófona University of Humanity and Technologies.

He was the president of the Board of Directors of the Institute for Social Development of Portugal between 1999 and 2003, president of the Institute of Social Security of Portugal from 2005 to 2011 and president of the National Council of Social Security. He was the vice-president and the representative of Portugal at the Social Protection Committee of the European Union and coordinated the National Action Plan for Inclusion (PNAI) between March 2001 and February 2003.

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Mary Butler



Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People of Ireland

Mary Butler is Minister of State at the Department of Health with special responsibility for Mental Health and Older People. She is a TD representing the Waterford Constituency. In the 32nd Dáil, Mary served as Chairperson of the Joint Oireachtas Committee for Business, Enterprise & Innovation and the All Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia. Mary served as a Councillor having won a seat in the 2014 Local elections in the Comeragh area before contesting the 2016 General Election after securing the Fianna Fáil nomination for Waterford. She also had the honour of being the first female Fianna Fáil TD to be elected for the party since 2007.

In the 2020 General Election, Mary was delighted to be re-elected to continue her work representing the people of Waterford City and County. She was appointed to sit on the Special Oireachtas Committee for Covid-19 response before being appointed a Minister by the Taoiseach in early July. She is married to Mick, has three children and credits her great family network as a crucial support throughout her life.

Annette Gibbons



Associate Deputy Minister of Employment and Social Development

On March 8, 2021, Annette Gibbons assumed the role of Associate Deputy Minister at Employment and Social Development Canada. Before joining ESDC, Annette served as Associate Deputy Minister at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (since 2018).

Annette has held various roles across several departments, including Assistant Secretary at the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2014–2017); Assistant Deputy Minister at Natural Resources Canada (2013–2014); Director General at Transport Canada (2009–2013); and Deputy Director General at Canadian Heritage (2006–2009).

Annette holds a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Ottawa, a Master of Arts degree in Public Administration from Carleton University and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Memorial University.

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Nathalie Barthoulot



Minister of the Department of the Interior of the Republic and Canton of Jura

Since 2016, Mrs Nathalie Barthoulot has been Minister of the Interior of the Republic and Canton of Jura. The administrative units under her department are the Cantonal Police, the Population Service, the Social Action Service, the Legal Service, the Social Insurance Service and the Child and Adult Protection Authority. The Department is also responsible for relations with the judicial authorities and has 292 employees.

Born in 1968, she graduated in 1991 with a degree in economics and began her professional career, first in a fiduciary office and then for several years in a large industrial company. She then became a teacher in the field of economics. At the same time, she was elected as a member of the Jura Parliament, a position she held from 1998 to 2009. During this period, she was a member of the Management and Finance Committee and chaired the Parliament in 2007. She gave up her mandate as a member of parliament when she became Director General of the Jura Education and Training Centre in 2009 and left this position when she was elected Minister. Since joining the Jura Government, she has twice been its President, in 2017 and 2021 respectively.

Liat Ayalon



Professor at the School of Social Work, Bar Ilan University, Israel

Liat Ayalon, is a Professor at the School of Social Work, Bar Ilan University, Israel. Ms. Ayalon served as coordinator of an international EU funded Ph.D. program on the topic of ageism (EuroAgeism.eu; 2017-2022). She is also the coordinator of the Israeli section of the EU funded MascAge program to study ageing masculinities in literature and cinema. Between 2014 and 2018, Ms. Ayalon led an international research network on the topic of ageism (notoageism.com). She consults both national and international organizations concerning the development and evaluation of programs and services for older adults.

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Tatiana Sorocan



Country Director for HelpAge International Moldova

Educational background: MA in Political Science and International Relations, two MA degrees in Education and Culture.

Professional expertise: over 15 years of progressive senior leadership role in social development with focus on strategic programme planning and development with specific expertise on change management, programme quality, civil society capacity building including coaching and leadership development of local organisations and institutions to increase their effectiveness.

Particular strengths lie in building relationships, effective representation and influencing at all levels. A principled and effective leader and colleague, committed to promoting organizational values, passionate about rights protection and promotion with focus on human rights-based approach and rights of older people. He built up the portfolio of work, including in the

Kai Leichsenring



Executive Director, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research

Kai Leichsenring has been Executive Director of European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research since 2016. His field of work includes strategic planning, administration and management, collaboration in national and international research projects, policy consultancy, presentations, and other dissemination activities. Formerly, he was self-employed social policy analyst and consultant, senior research associate and project manager, research fellow and free-lance social researcher for over 30 years.

Kai Leichsenring has a doctoral degree in Studies in Political Sciences and Communication Research, French and Literature from the University of Vienna.

He has experience in designing, organising, and directing national and cross-national studies in the field of social welfare and health research as well as in consultancy for national and international policy makers. He published and contributed to various books in particular on long-term care in Europe – improving policy and practice, integrating health and social care services for older persons, the use of small housing units for persons suffering from dementia, etc. He also published articles in peer-reviewed journals, stakeholder magazines and blogs, as well as reports and policy briefs. Kai Leichsenring has versatile experience in several projects Europe-wide in the field of long-term care.

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Benedetto Della Vedova



Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy

Born in Sondrio on 3 April 1962. After graduating in economics and social sciences from L. Bocconi University in Milan (1988), he became a researcher at IEFE (Institute for the Economics of Energy Sources, 1987-1990) and later a researcher at IREER (Research Institute of the Lombardy Region, 1990-1996).

He has written for a number of daily newspapers, such as Il Sole24Ore, Corriere Economia and Il Foglio; he has also created and presented columns on economic issues for Radio Radicale. He served as national Secretary (1994-1997) and Treasurer (1994-1996) of the Club Pannella-Reformers movement, and an executive of Lista Pannella (1997-1999).

In October 2005 he founded the “Riformatori Liberali” party, of which he became Chair. Elected to the European Parliament between 1999 and 2004, he served as a Member of the Italian Parliament from 2006 to 2013 and Senator from 2013 to 2018. A member of the Radical Party for 30 years, since January 2019 he serves as Secretary of Più Europa, the movement he founded together with Emma Bonino. He previously held the position of Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs from 2014 to 2018.

Andrea Orlando



Minister of Labour and Social Policies of Italy

Andrea Orlando was born in La Spezia on February 8th, 1969. He was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, from the 15th in 2006 to the current 18th legislature, and since 27 March 2018 he has been a member of the Parliamentary Group of the Democratic Party.

From 22 February 2014 to 1 June 2018, he held the position of Minister of Justice in the Governments chaired by Prime Minister Renzi and Prime Minister Gentiloni. From 28 April 2013 to 22 February 2014, he was appointed as Minister of the Environment and of the protection of the territory and the sea in the government chaired by Prime Minister Letta.

At the beginning of 2021 within the new government led by Mario Draghi, Andrea Orlando was chosen to lead the Ministry of Labour.

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Diene Keita



Deputy Executive Director (Programme) of UNFPA

Ms. Diene Keita, who recently served as Minister for Cooperation and African Integration with the Republic of Guinea, brings to the position nearly 30 years of experience within the United Nations System. She started her United Nations career in 1990 with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in New York as Programme Officer, and from this point held various successful programmatic leadership positions in New York and at country level, serving as UNDP Deputy Representative in Africa and in the Caribbean and as Representative to African Union in Addis Ababa.

Ms. Keita joined UNFPA in 2006 as Representative in Mauritania, and thereafter served in representative positions in Benin, as well as in the DRC and Nigeria (two of UNFPA's largest programmes globally) before joining the Guinean Government as a Cabinet Minister in 2018. During this time, Ms. Keita successfully led large and complex public health programmes, expanded strategic partnerships and mobilized critical resources to support delivery. While serving with UNFPA, Ms. Keita also acted as United Nations Resident Coordinator in Mauritania, Benin and DRC where she oversaw the United Nations system at the national level. All throughout her career, Ms. Keita has worked extensively on the empowerment of women and youth, inclusive growth, demographic issues, sustainable human development, addressing sexual and reproductive health, as well as gender-based violence in humanitarian settings. Dr Keita, who is fluent in English, French and Italian amongst other languages, holds a doctorate in Law, summa cum laude, a DEA in International Economics and Development Law; and a DESS in International Relations from the University of Paris1 Pantheon Sorbonne.

Heidrun Mollenkopf



AGE Platform Europe

Dr. Heidrun Mollenkopf has been Vice-President of AGE Platform Europe until 2021 and Board Member of the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO) since 2014. Between 2007 and 2014, Dr. Mollenkopf was member of the Expert Council of BAGSO and Chair of the "Universal Access and Independent Living" Expert Group of AGE Platform Europe.

Dr. Mollenkopf has a background in sociology and gerontology. She was Senior Researcher at the German Centre for Research on Ageing at the University of Heidelberg until she retired in December 2004. Her main research focus is the interplay among personal, societal, technical, and environmental regarding maintaining autonomy and social participation and, by this, quality of life in old age. She has pursued this interest in several large-scale research projects on technology and ageing and on the outdoor mobility of older persons first at the University of Mannheim, then at the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB) and the Free University of Berlin, and finally at the German Centre for Research on Ageing.

She has published widely in the fields of ageing and technology, mobility, senior friendly neighbourhoods and quality of life of older people. In addition, Heidrun Mollenkopf worked as a lecturer at several universities in Germany and Switzerland.

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Debra Whitman



Executive Vice President and Chief Public Policy Officer, AARP, United States of America

Debra Whitman, PhD, is an economist and expert on aging issues. She has extensive experience in U.S. policymaking and international research. She is a strategic thinker whose life's work has been devoted to improving the systems that impact us all throughout our lives.

As Chief Public Policy Officer for AARP, Dr. Whitman leads a team of experts in all aspects of policy development, analysis, research, and global thought leadership. In this role, she also directs AARP's international efforts, with a focus on working with institutions, governments, civil society, and the private sector to elevate aging in the global public discourse, identify and share innovations from around the world, and engage new strategic relationships.

She serves as an AARP spokesperson on a diverse set of issues, including retirement and financial security, health care and healthy longevity, engaging a multi-generational workforce, and long-term care and caregiving.

Dr. Whitman is a writer and public speaker, a mom, and an advocate for those whose voices need to be heard.

Follow her at @policydeb and learn more about AARP's work around the world at www.aarpinternational.org.

Dubravka Šuica



European Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography

Since December 2019, Dubravka Šuica is Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Democracy and Demography. Mrs Šuica is a Croatian politician from the city of Dubrovnik, where she served for two terms as its first female mayor and was awarded the 2006 World Mayor Award. Dubravka Šuica entered politics in the 1990s as a Member of the Croatian Democratic Union and served as a Member of the Croatian Parliament and Vice-Chair of the EU Integration Committee. Between 2004 and 2009 she was a Board Member of the Union of the Association of Towns and Municipalities of the Republic of Croatia.

During ten years she was the Vice-President of Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. From 2013 to 2019 Dubravka Šuica served as a Member of the European Parliament and Vice-Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee. In June 2019, Mrs Šuica was elected as first Vice Chair of EPP Group in the European Parliament. Since 2012, she is the Vice-President of EPP Women.

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Natasha Azzopardi-Muscat



Director of the Division of Country Health Policies and Systems, WHO Regional Office for Europe

Dr. Natasha Azzopardi-Muscat is a medical doctor, a specialist in public health, and the author of several publications in public health and European health policy. Following her qualification as a medical doctor from the University of Malta in 1995, Dr. Azzopardi-Muscat worked in various areas in the health sector in Malta, including maternal and child health, mental health, and primary care. Her transdisciplinary research bridging health policy, European studies and small states studies led to her PhD entitled “The Europeanisation of health systems: a small state perspective”.

Since 1999, Natasha has been a resident academic at the University of Malta, teaching in the department of health services management and public health. In 2003, she completed her specialization in public health medicine and obtained her membership in the Faculty of Public Health of the United Kingdom. Between 2001 and 2013, she occupied various senior positions in the Ministry of Health in Malta, including that of Chief Medical Officer.

Before joining WHO, Dr Azzopardi-Muscat served as President of the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) from 2016 to 2020, where she was actively involved in health advocacy at the European level.

Dr. Azzopardi-Muscat is married to Dr Conrad Azzopardi, a practicing physician, and has 3 children.

Pierpaolo Sileri



Undersecretary for Health, Italy

Pierpaolo Sileri is associate professor of Surgery at Università Vita e Salute, San Raffaele in Milan, and adjunct professor at Temple University, College of Science and technology, Philadelphia, PA, USA. He graduated in medicine at Tor Vergata University in Rome in 1998. In 2001 he obtained a Master of Science at University of Illinois at Chicago, IL, USA, and in 2005 a PhD in Technology, informatics and robotics in surgery at Tor Vergata University. He is author of more than 200 peer-reviewed scientific articles and book chapters, and has a H-Index of 37 (Scopus, accessed June 2022).

His main areas of competence are: laparoscopic and robotic surgery; gastrointestinal surgery with main interest in colorectal surgery including oncologic, functional and Inflammatory bowel diseases; pelvic floor surgery (leading the largest center in Italy for mininvasive surgery); autologous and eterologous cell transplantation; simulation in surgery, surgical education; surgical Innovations and technology assessment of medical devices.

In March 2018 he was elected to the Senate of the Italian Republic for the 5-Star Movement. In June 2018 he was appointed president of the Hygiene and Health Commission of the Italian Senate. In September 2019 he was appointed deputy Minister of Health in the second Giuseppe Conte Government, and in March 2021 he has been appointed Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Health in the Mario Draghi government, his actual role.

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Lisa Paus



Federal Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth of Germany

Lisa Paus has been Federal Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth since April 2022. She studied economics and political science at the Free University of Berlin from 1988 to 1999 and received a degree in economics.

From 1987 to 1988, she did a voluntary social year at the St. Elisabeth children's home in Hamburg. From 1997 to 1999, she was a staff member working under Green MEP Frieder Otto Wolf. In 2004/2005, she worked as a lecturer in economics at the Berlin School of Economics and Law.

She has been a member of the Bündnis 90/Die Grünen party from 1995. She was a member of the Berlin State Executive from 1997 to 1999, and served as a member of the Berlin House of Representatives from 1999 and 2009, acting also as spokesperson for economic policy, science policy, budget policy and European policy. She was a member of the Parliamentary Party Executive from 1999 to 2000 and from 2002 to 2004. Since 2009, she has been a member of the Bundestag and of the Finance Committee, including as chairperson until the end of the 2019 legislative period. From 2017 to 2021, she served as spokesperson for financial policy of the Bündnis 90/Die Grünen parliamentary party in the Bundestag. She was Deputy chair of the Bündnis 90/Die Grünen party in the Bundestag from December 2021 to April 2022. In April 2022, she was appointed as Federal Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

Maciej Kucharczyk



Secretary General, AGE Platform Europe

Secretary General of AGE Platform Europe, Maciej is responsible for the implementation of AGE strategic objectives and the development of the network. Maciej's work aims to ensure an ever-stronger voice for AGE members and older people to influence policies on ageing at European and international level.

From 2014 to 2020, Maciej was Vice-President of the Social Platform, the largest European network of rights-based NGOs working in the social sector. Maciej holds a master's degree in international economic relations and postgraduate degrees in European affairs and public administration.

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María Rodríguez Alcázar



Board Member, European Youth Forum

María Rodríguez Alcázar is Board Member at the European Youth Forum, the platform representing young people in Europe, composed by more than 100 youth organisations. She is responsible for the Social and Economic Inclusion of young people, advocating towards public institutions for policies to allow young people access their rights.

Since the age of 14 she works for youth rights at different levels, having been a student activist and Vice-President of the Spanish Youth Council previously. She has been engaged in several Human Rights mechanisms focusing particularly on age discrimination and asking for young people to be meaningfully involved in policy making.

Besides her volunteering in the youth field, she is a PhD student at Ghent University and the United Nations University Institute for Comparative Studies on Regional Integration. She has also worked as Policy and Advocacy Officer in civil society organisations.

Amal Abou Rafeh



Chief of the Programme on Ageing Section, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Amal Abou Rafeh is the Chief of the Programme on Ageing Unit Section at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. She serves on the Secretariat of the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and is a member of the Steering Committee of the Titchfield City Group on Ageing-related Statistics and Age-disaggregated Data. Ms. Abou Rafeh joined the United Nations in 2001, working in the areas of social policy, sustainable development and demography, and served on the Secretariats of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) and the High-level Meeting on Youth (2011). Prior to her career at the United Nations, she lectured and taught on the analysis of social and demographic data.

Amal Abou Rafeh holds a Master of Science degree in Population Studies from the American University of Beirut.

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Marta Diavolova



Deputy Regional Director a.i., UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office

Marta Diavolova is the Deputy Director a.i. of UNFPA's Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Ms. Diavolova has worked to promote women's health, development and human rights for more than twenty years. She joined UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, in 2000 as Assistant Representative in Bulgaria and later joined the UNFPA Regional Office serving in different capacities in the region. Marta has worked closely with government policy makers, parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations and leaders from all sectors to champion the health of women and girls, addressing demographic shifts and amplifying the youth agenda.

Daniela Bas



Director of Division for Inclusive Social Development, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Ms. Daniela Bas, of Italian nationality, is the Director of the Division for Inclusive Social Development at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DISD/UNDESA) since May 2011. Political scientist with a major in International Politics, she graduated Magna Cum Laude and speaks four languages. She is also a certified life coach and journalist and worked for the major press, Radio, and Television networks. Ms. Bas's interest has always been people-centred in the various activities, associations, and professional roles she has held. In addition to her work at the United Nations from 1986 to 1995, she held managerial roles until 2000 in the private sector in Italy.

From then until 2011 in Italy she was, inter alia, for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Secretary General of Comitato Interministeriale Diritti Umani (CIDU), Board Member of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (EUFRA) and of the Committee to Promote non-Armed and non-Violent Civil Defense of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, adviser for the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (UNAR) in Italy. Ms. Bas was also the special adviser to the Vice President of the European Commission (On. Frattini) on human rights, democracy, and social affairs.

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