



## UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing

Rome, 15. – 17. 6. 2022

Thank you for the floor, Ms Keating.

Dear Minister Bonetti, panellists, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting and giving me the opportunity to participate in such an important conference on ageing, and the challenges that an ageing population poses, not only for countries respectfully, but for the world as a whole.

We have marked 20 years since the adoption of the Madrid International Action Plan on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS).

Some of you here were already involved in the preparation and adoption of these documents 20 years ago, while I was still being taken care of – in a big part, by my dear grandmother and grandfather.

It is also because of this that I understand and respect the contribution of older people to my life and to society at large.

The word solidarity means a lot to us. In the context of an ageing population it means that the people that helped to create this society, have the right and the ability to enjoy and participate in it when they get older. And not to be aliens in the world they helped to create.

We believe that the conditions for this are firstly material. Decent jobs, decent pensions, accessible help, inclusive infrastructure and universal public services. Ageing and the needs of older people should not become a part of the market. Needs of older people should not become a source of profit.

If the basic infrastructure of solidarity is established - social inclusion, autonomy of older people and their general well-being will be much easier to achieve.

We have to also address old age poverty and transgenerational transmission of poverty. And include the questions of gender, education and work into today's policies, aimed at addressing the issues of the ageing population.

If we talk about active and healthy ageing and participation of older people, we have to talk critically about work. Too many times the exploitation of workers ruins their health. We have to therefore ensure decent jobs, safe and healthy work environments and allow people to retire without stigmatization.

We are therefore not willing to support the lifting of the retirement age. Not while we are facing big levels of precarization and an overworked population. People that want to work, should be allowed to work, but nobody should be forced to work longer. No exploitation of older persons on the one hand – and no discrimination for those who want to work, on the other.

For this to work we need:

- Decent minimum pensions.

- Social benefits and transfers that do not contribute to intergenerational transmission of poverty.
- Long-term care as a public and universal service.
- Existence of other forms of care, that are not institution-based.
- Social inclusion and intergenerational solidarity.

As you may know, a new government has just been appointed in Slovenia. This government has committed to actively address population ageing and the challenges it brings. In our programme, we have highlighted the importance of intergenerational alliances, active and dignified ageing and better access to services, especially in the area of long-term care. This is precisely why we will also establish a new Ministry for a Solidarity Future, which will be based on the importance of intergenerational cooperation and solidarity and the realisation of human rights at all stages of life. We want to ensure that everyone has the possibility to live in dignity, to age actively, and to participate fully in society.

Thank you.