

## Speaking note – „Member States‘ interventions on national progress towards the implementation of MIPAA/RIS

**Thema:** UNECE Minister:innenkonferenz „A Sustainable World For All Ages. Joining forces for solidarity and equal opportunities throughout life“

**Themengebiet:** Internationale Senior:innenpolitik

**Datum:** 09.06.2022

Colleagues,

ladies and gentlemen!

- I would like to take the opportunity to **thank the UNECE**, as well as the **Government of Italy**, for organizing this important event. Thank you for bringing all of us together to **discuss ageing policies**.
- The period under review was characterized by **many severe challenges**. However, we also see important **achievements**.
- For decades, Austria has been setting **standards** with measures for **enhancing the quality of life among older persons**.
- Austria’s ageing policies are based on the **Federal Plan for Senior Citizens, “Ageing and the Future”**, which was prepared in cooperation with the Federal Senior Citizens Advisory Board.
- One of the key elements of the Plan is to **involve older persons** in developing these policies. **Significant progress** could be achieved in all areas of the Plan during the period under review.
- We all agree that **social and health matters cannot be addressed separately** as they are **closely connected, complementary fields**. When

talking about health, it is important to address both physical and mental health.

- In this context, I'd like to mention the **“Healthy and Active Ageing Dialogue”**. This forum was set up to **promote good health** in older persons, including **social participation**, while fostering a **positive image of ageing**.
- Another major milestone was the **Second Adult Protection Act** (2. Erwachsenenschutzgesetz), which entered into force in 2018. It substantially strengthened the rights of older persons represented by a guardian, with the aim of a self-determined and independent life.
- Even though there have been **improvements** in the period under review, the **care sector** remains one of the **major challenges of the future**. Central issues of concern include a stronger focus on self-determination and personal responsibility, better support to relieve the burden on family members, expansion of services, and uniform standards.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become even more evident that **loneliness in later life is a growing problem**. Austria has therefore taken a **number of measures** to promote easily accessible offers. In order to fight loneliness, services in the fields of education and training, including digital skills, have been supported. We have also worked to foster local community assistance and care networks and reinforced community projects, including **support for volunteering activities in this field**.
- However, feeling isolated and lonely has been a widespread phenomenon among older persons, not only during the pandemic. **Additional measures will therefore be needed** to further ensure **social participation and thus, social cohesion**.
- Looking to the future, further efforts to **adequately protect older persons from discrimination and to combat ageism are necessary**. **Creating a more positive image of ageing and preventing violence** will feature prominently on Austria's political agenda on ageing policies.
- Topics such as creating an **age-friendly environment, fostering the self-determination and dignity of older persons, especially towards the end**

**of their lives, and providing digital training to older persons** will be key aspects of Austria's ageing policies.

- Last but not least, it is important to take action against rising poverty through inflation and to look at the topic of old-age poverty, which especially affects older women.
  
- Thank you very much.