



Economic Commission for Europe**Standing Working Group on Ageing****Fifteenth meeting**

Geneva, 21 and 22 November 2022

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

**Implementation of the Standing Working
Group on Ageing work programme in 2022
and plans for 2023****Implementation of the Standing Working Group on Ageing
work programme in 2022****Note by the Secretariat****I. Introduction**

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Working Group on Ageing (WGA) was established in 2008 as an intergovernmental mechanism to facilitate the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and of its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS). On 24 July 2020, following resolution 2020/19 of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), revised terms of reference of WGA updating its mandate and changing its name to Standing Working Group on Ageing (SWGA) came into force.
2. The SWGA work programme for the fourth implementation cycle of the MIPAA/RIS in 2018-2022 was adopted at the eleventh meeting of the Working Group in November 2018 (ECE/WG.1/2018/2). The Lisbon Ministerial Declaration (ECE/AC.30/2017/2/Rev.1), endorsed by 46 member States at the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in September 2017 (Lisbon, Portugal), is at the basis of this five-year work programme.
3. This document is prepared by the secretariat for the fifteenth SWGA meeting. It addresses the implementation of the SWGA programme of work during the year 2022, including the carrying out of the fourth review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS, the Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Rome in 2022, and main outputs for the key areas of activity: policy seminars; policy briefs with good practice examples; capacity development; as well as monitoring the implementation of MIPAA/RIS and strengthening the evidence base for policymaking. It also outlines selected planned activities for 2023.



II. Implementation of the main elements of the work programme for 2022

A. Fourth cycle of review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and of its Regional Implementation Strategy

1. Review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS implementation

4. Between September 2021 and July 2022, 41 ECE member States submitted their national reports on the progress of MIPAA/RIS implementation to the ECE secretariat. The findings and results of 40 reports submitted in advance of the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing were integrated in the Synthesis Report on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in the ECE region between 2017 and 2022. The secretariat presented a summary (ECE/AC.30/2022/3) of this report at the Ministerial Conference.

5. To mark the 20th anniversary of the adoption of MIPAA/RIS, the secretariat, upon the request of member States, developed the MIPAA/RIS+20 Report (ECE/WG.1/40), providing an overview of the most important trends related to population ageing in the ECE region, progress in implementing MIPAA/RIS since 2002 and an outlook for the way forward. A summary of this Report was also presented at the Ministerial Conference.

6. As part of the fourth review and appraisal cycle of MIPAA, the secretariat also provided inputs to the drafting of the Secretary-General report on the “Fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002” to be presented to the Commission for Social Development in February 2023.

2. ECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing

7. The title and thematic content of the 2022 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing was approved by SWGA at its fourteenth meeting in November 2021. The Ministerial Conference under the broad theme of “A Sustainable World for All Ages: Joining forces for solidarity and equal opportunities throughout life”, took place in Rome, Italy, on 16 and 17 June 2022. It was organized by ECE in collaboration with SWGA and the Government of Italy. It was the culmination of the fourth review and appraisal cycle (2017-2022) of MIPAA/RIS at the regional level in ECE countries, and marked the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS). During the conference, expert panels and ministerial round tables focused on the following three main themes: (1) promoting active and healthy ageing throughout life; (2) ensuring access to long-term care and support for carers and families; and (3) mainstreaming ageing to advance a society for all ages.

8. The Ministerial Conference concluded with the successful adoption of the Rome Ministerial Declaration on ageing, which will guide SWGA work during the fifth implementation cycle of MIPAA/RIS in 2022-2027. During the preparation for the Ministerial Conference, SWGA members, in particular the SWGA Bureau, and the ECE secretariat worked closely on drafting the Ministerial Declaration. Two rounds of formal consultations with member States took place in the first half of 2022, and agreement was reached on the following three main goals of the Ministerial Declaration: (1) promoting active and healthy ageing throughout life; (2) ensuring access to long-term care and support for carers and families; and (3) mainstreaming ageing to advance a society for all ages. The Rome Ministerial Declaration was adopted by consensus by 44 ECE member States present at the Ministerial Conference.

9. Preceding the Ministerial Conference, a Joint Forum of Civil Society and Scientific Research took place on 15 June 2022. The Forum adopted a Joint Declaration of Civil Society and Scientific Research that was presented at the Ministerial Conference.

10. During the Ministerial Conference, side events organized by member States, civil society and international organisations underlined diverse topics including: (1) preventing the loss of autonomy; (2) combatting elder abuse; (3) promoting age-responsive crisis

management; (4) implementing the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing; (5) strengthening demographic resilience; (6) the interlinkages of MIPAA policies and human rights mechanisms; and (7) the coordination of ageing policies in Italy. Furthermore, a poster exhibition on older persons in emergency situations held during the Conference presented 39 examples from across the ECE region of protecting, supporting, and engaging older persons in different types of emergencies.

B. International cooperation, exchange of experience and policy discussion

1. Policy seminars on ageing

11. The policy seminars on ageing became a regular part of the SWGA programme of work in 2018-2022, following highly positive feedback by SWGA members after the first event in November 2018. The seminars are normally held back-to-back with the annual meetings of SWGA. The fifth Policy seminar on ageing will be held on 23 November 2022 on the topic of quality in long-term care. The topic was agreed by the SWGA Bureau at the third session of its fourteenth meeting in September 2022, based on the results of a questionnaire sent to SWGA members.

12. The fifth Policy seminar will provide an opportunity for SWGA members to reflect on the determinants of quality in long-term care and its implications for the quality of life of older persons. The seminar will approach the issue of quality from the perspective of meeting growing needs for human and material resources, as well as from the point of view of mechanisms for quality assurance and monitoring. It will showcase country experiences and good practices, and it will facilitate exchanges between policy makers, civil society representatives, researchers and other experts on this theme in the ECE region.

13. From 2023 onwards, the modality of policy seminars is expected to change, as they will become an integral part of the annual meetings of SWGA in the form of interactive in-depth policy discussions. The topic for the 2023 policy discussion will be agreed by SWGA members at the fifteenth meeting of SWGA in November 2022.

2. Policy briefs

14. The ECE series of Policy Briefs on Ageing provides information on policies and promotes an exchange of good practice examples among member States regarding different areas of MIPAA/RIS. The policy briefs integrate a wealth of contributions and experiences from member States. All published policy briefs are available on the ECE website including translations into national languages provided by the members of SWGA.¹

15. Policy Brief No. 27 on “Mainstreaming Ageing – Revisited” was issued in February 2022, complementing activities related to the operationalisation of the UNECE Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing. The topic of issue No. 28 of the Policy Brief series was agreed at the fourteenth SWGA meeting in 2021 and will be dedicated to “Joining forces for solidarity and equal opportunities throughout life,” the theme of the 2022 Ministerial Conference.

C. Guidelines and policy recommendations, advisory services and capacity-building

1. Road maps for mainstreaming ageing

16. Road maps for mainstreaming ageing, developed in collaboration with member States at their request, provide a guide through which the country in question can enhance implementation of MIPAA/RIS through mainstreaming ageing across broader national policies, taking into account the specificities of the country.

17. In 2022, the Republic of Moldova requested ECE to conduct a ten-year evaluation of the implementation of its Road Map adopted in 2012. The objective was to review progress

¹ Available from <https://unece.org/policy-briefs>.

made and to make recommendations to inform the development of a new programme on ageing in 2022. The evaluation was carried out during the second quarter of 2022, based on a desk review of research evidence and policy documents and stakeholder consultations carried out through a written survey, interviews, and focus-group discussions in April-May 2022. The draft report with recommendations was submitted to the national focal point on ageing in July 2022.

2. Capacity development on mainstreaming ageing

18. At its eleventh meeting, the Working Group decided to include the development of guidelines for mainstreaming ageing in its programme of work for 2019-2020 and to establish a task force to guide this work. The ECE Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing were issued in March 2021, providing policymakers with suggestions on how to advance or improve their mainstreaming efforts, considering ageing both from a societal and individual life-course perspective. They outline five stages to develop a Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Ageing, with the aim of facilitating the systematic consideration and integration of ageing aspects into broader national policies. A pilot toolkit was developed in 2021 to facilitate the implementation of the guidelines.

19. To build capacity on mainstreaming ageing among policymakers, a series of training workshops focusing on age-sensitive analysis and the integration of ageing aspects into broader policies have been organised for national and local civil servants in the Republic of Moldova. The workshops have been organised in collaboration with the National Focal Point on Ageing of the Republic of Moldova and the UNFPA country office and will take place in the fourth quarter of 2022.

20. To support the operationalisation and dissemination of the guidelines, a short, interactive online training course has been under development in 2022. The course, aimed at policymakers and the interested public, provides a brief introduction to mainstreaming ageing, to the recommended stages in developing a national framework for mainstreaming ageing, and to the proposed mechanisms to mainstream ageing in policies at the national level.

D. Monitoring the implementation of the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and building an evidence base for policymaking

Building an evidence base for policymaking

21. The secretariat has continued to act as a clearinghouse for data administration of the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) and as a coordinator of the network of national teams' representatives – the GGP Council of Partners. In this capacity, the ECE secretariat co-organized an online annual meeting of the Council of Partners on 21 June 2022. As the co-ordinator of the GGP Council of Partners, the ECE secretariat performs a bridging function between those responsible for programme management and development and those in charge of its implementation at the national level. ECE also processes applications by scientists and experts who wish to use GGP microdata data for their research.²

22. The GGP is a leading data source for policy-relevant research on demographic trends and processes in the ECE region. The data and research findings from the GGP have been used for computing AAI indicators in several non-EU countries and supported some policy measures addressing low fertility and intergenerational equity concerns. The GGP data are also used in computing a number of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators by several countries.

E. Partnerships and communication

23. The secretariat has continued to be closely involved in the activities of the Joint Programme on Ageing, a regional initiative developed in collaboration with the United

² Data can be accessed by registered users at www.ggp-i.org.

Nations Population Fund Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the World Health Organization, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and HelpAge International. It aims to strengthen coordinated support and action on ageing-related issues in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

24. The ECE secretariat collaborates with other United Nations entities in the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing (IAGA) to promote the system-wide implementation of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing. As part of this joint effort, the secretariat in cooperation with the World Health Organisation and the United Nations Development Coordination Office has been organising in 2022 two “online clinics” on ageing-related issues for United Nations Resident Coordinators planned to take place in the fourth quarter of 2022.

25. The secretariat also continued to foster collaborations with civil society and the scientific research community. The ECE Secretariat actively contributed to various events organized by partners, including an event to commemorate the 2022 International Day of Older Persons in Geneva on the topic of older persons and climate change.

26. To support the dissemination of the outputs of the Standing Working Group and the results of the Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Rome, the secretariat issued three press releases, issued newsletters for the participants of the Ministerial Conference, and shared outputs and results via social media³.

III. Conclusions

27. The 2022 Rome Ministerial Declaration provided an important framework of reference to streamline activities in implementing and monitoring MIPAA/RIS in the ECE region between 2018-2022. The key role of the ECE Working Group on Ageing as the facilitator of MIPAA/RIS implementation in the region has been reconfirmed by the ECOSOC resolution 2020/19 that endorsed the revised terms of reference and the change of name to a Standing Working Group on Ageing.

28. SWGA activities and outputs in 2022 were centred around the fourth review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS implementation as well as the further operationalization of the Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing, the policy seminar, policy brief and capacity-building activities.

29. In the first half of 2022, SWGA and its secretariat led the preparations for the regional review of MIPAA/RIS, which culminated with the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Rome, Italy, in June 2022. The 2022 Rome Ministerial Declaration was adopted during the Ministerial Conference, providing a framework for implementing and monitoring MIPAA/RIS in the ECE region in the next implementation cycle between 2023-2027. At its September 2022 meeting, the SWGA Bureau commenced discussions on the SWGA work programme for 2023-2027, which will be continued at the annual meeting of SWGA in November 2022.

30. In 2022, SWGA also pursued its commitment to mainstreaming ageing in policy and regulatory frameworks and supported the development of an online training course and capacity building activities to operationalize the Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing published in March 2021.

31. Since the fourteenth SWGA meeting, additional financial contributions from Estonia, Germany, Norway, and Switzerland to the Ageing-Phase III fund in support of the SWGA work programme amounted to 158 040,90 USD.

32. The regular budget P5 post that became vacant in the ECE secretariat on 1 July 2022 was filled by 1 August 2022.

³ The Twitter account of the Population Unit can be reached at https://twitter.com/pu_unece.