



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

Geneva, 20–22 November 2023

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Work of the Bureau**Report on the fifteenth meeting of the Bureau of the Standing Working Group on Ageing****I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of agenda**

1. The Bureau meeting took place on 27 and 28 April 2023 in Istanbul (Türkiye), in person and online, and was hosted by the Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye. Bureau members from the following member States attended the meeting: Austria, Ireland, Italy, Spain, and Türkiye participated in person, while Germany and Portugal attended the meeting online. Representatives from Canada, Italy and Norway, who joined the Bureau temporarily for the development of the Programme of Work 2023–2027 of the Standing Working Group on Ageing (SWGA), participated in the meeting. The director of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (European Centre Vienna) represented the academic and research community. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were represented by AGE Platform Europe. The Bureau member from Georgia was unable to attend. Six representatives of the host country attended the meeting as observers.
2. The Chair of SWGA, Italy, chaired the meeting.
3. The Director General of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly at the Ministry of Family and Social Services welcomed participants and delivered opening remarks on behalf of the host country.
4. The Bureau adopted the agenda of the meeting without modifications.

II. Introduction by host country: ageing policy in Türkiye

5. The Bureau member from Türkiye presented the Government's new Ageing Vision Document to the Bureau. After an overview of key demographic trends, she highlighted that the Government's new policy approach to address population ageing has a rights-based approach and is aligned with the goals of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) as well as with the Constitution and relevant legislative framework in Türkiye. The Ageing Vision Document was informed by a recent report by the Grand National Assembly's Investigation Commission that made comprehensive recommendations on how to address the challenges of population ageing. The Ageing Vision Document aims to protect the rights of older persons and to mainstream ageing following a rights-based, development-oriented, coordinated, and inclusive approach. It addresses the areas of healthy and active ageing,



participation in social life, age-friendly environments, disasters and humanitarian emergencies, rights of older persons as well as implementation and monitoring. The National Action Plan on the Rights of Older Persons (2023–2025) includes 183 activities aimed to implement the Ageing Vision Document, responsible and relevant actors, as well as indicators to monitor progress.

6. During the discussion following the introductory remarks, members of the Bureau welcomed the comprehensive and ambitious policy document. The Bureau invited the representative of Türkiye to present it at the sixteenth meeting of SWGA in November 2023.

III. Update on events since the fifteenth meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing

A. Fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing at the sixty-first session of the Commission for Social Development

7. The Chair informed the Bureau about events relating to the fourth review and appraisal of MIPAA that took place during the sixty-first session of the Commission for Social Development in New York in February 2023. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region was represented by the Chair of SWGA on the High-Level panel on the fourth review and appraisal of MIPAA on 8 February 2023. The panel discussion was followed by an in-person side event on “MIPAA at 20: fit for future?” organized by the Bureau in collaboration with the secretariat at the request of SWGA and co-sponsored by Germany, Italy, and Türkiye. It was webcast on UN Web TV. Participants noted the open and engaged discussion. The Vice-Chair of SWGA (Germany) also contributed the region’s perspective to an additional side event organized by all regional commissions on “Leaving No One Behind at the Regional Level: Adopting an Age-Sensitive Lens to Policymaking” which was held online on 13 February 2023.

8. The Bureau was informed about the draft resolution on the fourth review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002 (E/CN.5/2023/L.6) that the Commission for Social Development recommended to the Economic and Social Council for adoption.

B. Meeting of the Chair with the Executive Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

9. The Bureau was informed by the Chair about the approval of the programme of work of the population component of the housing, land management and population subprogramme for 2023, as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2022/5, by the UNECE Executive Committee at its 127th meeting on 16 March 2023.

10. The Chair further informed Bureau members that representatives from the Republic of Moldova, Turkmenistan, and the European Union expressed appreciation for the achievements of SWGA in 2022. The representative of Turkmenistan expressed interest in capacity-building to ensure long-term care and social services for older persons and to prevent social exclusion and inequality in old age. The representative of the Republic of Moldova expressed appreciation for the support received in 2022 and indicated interest in strengthening cooperation to advance the full integration of older persons’ needs in the national legal framework, age-friendly cities, and digital literacy programmes for older persons to access public services. The secretariat will follow up on the requests for capacity-building expressed during the meeting.

C. Side event at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

11. The secretariat informed the Bureau about the side event organized as a contribution to the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development on 28 March 2023. Entitled “Towards age-friendly sustainable cities and communities”, the event, which was organized jointly with the World Health Organization (WHO), demonstrated how investments towards age-friendly environments contribute to the 2030 Agenda’s ambition to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11) as well as other SDGs and targets. It further highlighted synergies between SDG 17, SDG 11 and age-friendly environments. Representatives of the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities from Ireland, Poland, and Spain as well as leaders in healthy ageing from Tajikistan shared concrete actions being taken in their countries and communities to foster the abilities of older persons and create better environments in which to grow old. Sixty-six participants from 30 countries attended the side event.

D. Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

12. The Bureau was briefed on the thirteenth session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG-A) that took place in New York on 3–6 April 2023. The session focused on two areas for the protection of the human rights of older persons, “the right to health and access to health services” and “social inclusion”. Member States adopted (without a vote) the draft decision A/AC.278/2023/L.1/Rev.1 “Identification of possible gaps in the protection of the human rights of older persons and how best to address them” which specified “participation in public life and in decision-making processes” and “accessibility, infrastructure and habitat (transport, housing and access)” as areas for consideration in 2024. Furthermore, Member States requested the Chair of the OEWG-A to appoint two co-facilitators to facilitate the consideration of the existing international framework of the human rights of older persons and the identification of possible gaps in the protection of the human rights of older persons and how to best address them and requested the co-facilitators to submit proposed intergovernmental negotiated recommendations to be considered at the fourteenth session in 2024. The Chair of SWGA invited members of the Bureau who attended the meeting to share their impressions with the Bureau.

E. Seventieth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

13. The Chair informed the Bureau about his informal meeting with chairpersons of the UNECE sectoral committees on the occasion of the seventieth session of UNECE on 19 April 2023. The meeting focused on the theme of digital and green transformations in support of sustainable development, which was the theme of the Commission session, and provided a valuable opportunity to raise awareness about the activities of SWGA. The Bureau agreed to explore potential areas of exchange and collaboration with UNECE committees working on relevant areas such as housing, transport, environment, and digitalization to enhance synergies.

IV. Ongoing and planned activities and opportunities in 2023

A. Policy Brief on Ageing

14. The secretariat presented the draft Policy Brief on Ageing No. 28 “Older persons in vulnerable situations” and noted that many pertinent policy examples had been received by members of SWGA. Members of the Bureau provided comments on the full draft of the policy brief.

15. The Bureau welcomed the proposed new design of the policy brief and proposal to prepare a short executive summary providing key messages, complementing the policy brief. The Bureau agreed to maintain the title “Policy Brief on Ageing” going forward and

welcomed the proposal by the secretariat to organize a launch event to enhance the outreach and dissemination of the policy brief.

B. Capacity development on mainstreaming ageing

16. The secretariat informed the Bureau about progress in developing different training formats on mainstreaming ageing, including workshops on age-sensitive analysis, piloted in Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, and an expert workshop on mainstreaming ageing piloted by the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO) in Germany. To facilitate the replication of these workshop formats in other countries, the secretariat has prepared a reference guide and facilitator's guide for workshops on age-sensitive analysis and age-responsive policy formulation.

17. The secretariat further updated the Bureau on progress on the online course on mainstreaming ageing. Following testing of the course by several SWGA members and stakeholders earlier in the year, it has been revised considering the feedback received. Bureau members expressed their appreciation of the new course and discussed possible avenues for dissemination, including the translation of the course into national languages and exploring the possibility of integrating it into training curricula for civil servants.

18. The Bureau welcomed the proposal by the secretariat to organize a dedicated online event to inform SWGA members and stakeholders about the mainstreaming ageing capacity-building formats developed and to encourage their use across UNECE member States.

C. Ageing Policies Database

19. The Bureau was briefed on progress in the development of the new Ageing Policies Database since the approval of the project in November 2022. During the first quarter of 2023 the secretariat carried out a mapping of existing databases to ensure that no existing efforts were duplicated. The secretariat further developed a preliminary list of policy themes and instruments for potential inclusion in the database. The high-level themes reflect the policy goals and objectives covered in MIPAA, its Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) and the 2022 Rome Ministerial Declaration. Based on the coding framework developed, a sample of MIPAA reports were screened for concrete policy measures. The exercise yielded between 30 and 70 policy measures mentioned in the reports for potential inclusion in the database. During the discussion it was agreed that in the first phase of development, content will be developed for a selected number of themes and instruments. Bureau members were invited to share priority topic areas and policy instruments with the secretariat.

20. Next steps in the development will be to screen all MIPAA reports submitted for the fourth review and appraisal in 2021–2022 and to develop a technical beta version of the database. Progress will be reported to SWGA at its sixteenth meeting.

D. Roadmaps for mainstreaming ageing

21. The Bureau was informed that the secretariat received a request for technical assistance with the development of a National Strategy and Action Plan for Healthy and Active Longevity from Uzbekistan. The Bureau was informed that technical assistance will draw on the roadmap for mainstreaming ageing methodology and will be carried out in close collaboration with WHO and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This will provide an opportunity to create stronger synergies with the action areas of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing.

E. Regional expert consultation on older persons and climate change

22. The Bureau was informed about the "Regional expert consultation on older persons in the context of climate change-induced disasters and building back better in Europe and North America" organized online in May 2023 by the Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights for the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons in collaboration with the secretariat. Similar expert consultations were carried out across all regions. The Bureau was informed that, drawing on the consultations in different world regions, the Independent Expert will present a detailed report on the topic to the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

F. Other opportunities for awareness-raising on ageing

23. The Bureau was further informed that the secretariat will collaborate with the NGO Committee on Ageing in organizing an event to commemorate the International Day of Older Persons, building on the successful online event that was jointly organized in September 2022. The 2023 event will be on the theme “Climate change-induced disasters: Older persons’ preparedness and response to build forward better” and is planned to take place in Geneva and online, on 28 September 2023.

24. The representative of Austria informed the Bureau about a planned conference on human rights of older persons that will take place in Austria in November 2023 and invited representation of SWGA at the conference through the Chair.

25. The Chair proposed to prepare a calendar of events related to ageing for raising awareness on the topic of ageing and invited members of the Bureau to share different opportunities of which they are aware.

V. Ageing – Phase III project – Evaluation

26. The Bureau was briefed by the evaluator on the forthcoming end-of-project evaluation of the Ageing – Phase III project and had the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed methodology. The evaluation will focus on activities by SWGA carried out between 2020 and 2022 with funding provided by member States through the Ageing Fund. Specifically, these include policy briefs and policy seminars on ageing, the development of the Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing and related tools and training activities as well as activities related to the fourth review and appraisal of the implementation of MIPAA/RIS. The evaluation will seek feedback of members of SWGA through a survey and interviews. The findings and recommendations of the evaluation will be shared with SWGA at its sixteenth meeting.

VI. Programme of Work of the Standing Working Group on Ageing 2023–2027

27. SWGA at its fifteenth meeting decided to form an extended Bureau to develop a programme of work of SWGA for the years 2023–2027 and invited member States to join the extended Bureau. Following the invitation, representatives from Belgium, Canada, Italy and Norway joined the extended Bureau to develop a draft for a new Programme of Work for 2023–2027. Between March and April 2023 the Bureau worked with the secretariat on the key elements of the programme of work and organized two ad hoc online meetings in March to discuss the proposed elements of work and topical priorities for the fifth implementation cycle of MIPAA/RIS. The Bureau finalized the draft Programme of Work of SWGA 2023–2027 during the Bureau meeting and agreed for the draft to be shared with members of SWGA for comments ahead of the sixteenth meeting at which the new Programme of Work of SWGA will be tabled for adoption.

28. The secretariat will prepare a project document based on the new Programme of Work of SWGA to invite SWGA members to pledge financial support towards its implementation. The Bureau recommended planning for a shorter project timeframe for Phase IV of the Ageing project of two years instead of the current four.

VII. Task force for the follow-up on paragraph 47 of the Rome Ministerial Declaration

29. The Bureau discussed the modalities of following up on the decision of SWGA to establish a task force for the follow-up on paragraph 47 of the Rome Ministerial Declaration, entrusting SWGA with the task of updating MIPAA/RIS. The tentative timeline for updating RIS foresees the development of a proposal for modalities of updating RIS in 2023 (to be agreed at the sixteenth meeting of SWGA), the agreement on structure and key elements to be included in 2024, the preparation of a first draft in 2025, followed by consultations and revisions in 2026 and the finalization and adoption of the new document at the Ministerial Conference on Ageing in 2027.

30. The Bureau nominated Germany, Vice-Chair of SWGA, to chair the task force for the follow-up on paragraph 47 of the Rome Ministerial Declaration. Austria and Italy expressed interest in joining the task force. The Bureau agreed that civil society and the academic and research community will be represented on the task force by the civil society and the academic and research community representatives in the Bureau. In a first step, the task force will develop the modalities for a participatory approach involving civil society and the academic and research community, which will be implemented in a second step.

31. Following up on the discussion, the Chair of the task force, with the support of the secretariat, will prepare the terms of reference, and invite members of SWGA to join the task force.

VIII. International Conference on Population and Development – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Regional Report and Conference

32. The secretariat briefed the Bureau about the forthcoming Regional Conference “Population and Development: Ensuring Rights and Choices” that will take place in Geneva on 19 and 20 October 2023, building up to the thirtieth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 2024. The Regional Conference on ICPD30, co-organized by UNECE and the UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia will focus on three themes: “population dynamics and sustainable development”, “families, sexual and reproductive health over the life course”, and “inequalities, social inclusion and rights”. The Conference seeks to assess progress, highlight good practices and identify gaps in implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. It further seeks to strengthen linkages for acceleration of ICPD and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and identify priorities for the way forward.

33. The Bureau expressed interest in providing inputs to the organization of the Regional ICPD30 Conference and asked the secretariat to explore the possibility of being represented on the advisory committee for the Conference.

IX. Preparations of the sixteenth meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing

34. The Bureau discussed the draft agenda and tentative timetable for the sixteenth meeting of SWGA and asked the secretariat to explore the possibility of modifying the start/end times of SWGA meeting to facilitate travel arrangements. Bureau members further agreed to explore the possibility of funding an evening reception on the first day to enhance opportunities for informal exchange between members of the group.

35. The Bureau agreed that the topic for Policy Brief No. 29, to be issued in 2024, will be decided at the sixteenth meeting of SWGA. The Bureau welcomed the proposal by the secretariat to invite the Titchfield Group on ageing-related statistics and age-disaggregated data to the sixteenth meeting to learn about their work. The Bureau further discussed possible

topics for the break-out group discussions and agreed on the topic of exploring the possibility of developing a quantitative monitoring framework for MIPAA/RIS implementation.

X. Other business

36. No additional matters were raised.

XI. Decisions, summary and closing of the meeting

37. The secretariat summarized the main elements of the discussions and reviewed all decisions and action points. The Bureau adopted the draft decisions (see Annex to this document).

38. The Chair and the secretariat thanked the host country's representatives for generously hosting the fifteenth meeting of the Bureau in Istanbul. The Chair closed the meeting.

39. The next ad hoc Bureau meeting will take place in Geneva on 20 November 2023 ahead of the sixteenth meeting of SWGA. The room number will be communicated closer to the time.

Annex

Decisions adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Bureau of the Standing Working Group on Ageing

- Item 1: The Bureau adopted the agenda of the meeting without modifications.
- Item 2: The Bureau invited the representative from Türkiye to translate the new ageing vision document and action plan into English to share it with SWGA and to present it briefly at the sixteenth session of SWGA.
- Item 3e: In follow-up to the Chair's informal meeting with the chairpersons of UNECE sectoral committees during the seventieth session of UNECE in April 2023, the Bureau agreed to explore potential areas of exchange and collaboration with UNECE committees working on relevant areas such as housing, transport, environment, and digitalization to enhance synergies.
- Item 4a: The Bureau approved the proposed new design of the policy brief and proposal to prepare a 2–3-page executive summary providing the key messages of the policy brief. The Bureau decided to maintain the title «Policy Brief on Ageing» going forward. The Bureau also agreed to the proposal by the secretariat to organize a launch event to enhance the outreach and dissemination of the policy brief No. 28.
- Item 4b: The Bureau requested the secretariat to organize an online event to inform SWGA members and stakeholders on mainstreaming ageing capacity-building formats developed and piloted in 2022–2023, including training workshops on age-sensitive analysis, an expert workshop on mainstreaming ageing, and the online course.
- Item 4c: The Bureau was briefed on and appreciated the preparatory work on the Ageing Policies Database. Bureau members were invited to propose priority topic areas and policy instruments to be included.
- Item 4f: The representative of Austria informed the Bureau about a planned conference on human rights of older persons in Austria in November 2023 and invited representation of SWGA at the conference through the Chair. The Chair proposed to prepare a calendar of events related to ageing for raising awareness on the topic.
- Item 5: The Bureau was briefed on the end-of-project evaluation of the Ageing – Phase III project and was invited to propose questions for inclusion in the evaluation survey and interviews.
- Item 6: The Bureau approved the draft Programme of Work of SWGA 2023–2027 (as revised during the meeting) to be shared with SWGA for comments ahead of its sixteenth meeting. The secretariat will prepare a project document based on the new Programme of Work of SWGA to invite SWGA members to pledge financial support towards its implementation. The Bureau recommended planning for a shorter project timeframe for Phase IV of the Ageing project of two years instead of the current four.
- Item 7: The Bureau nominated Germany to chair the task force for the follow-up on paragraph 47 of the Rome Ministerial Declaration. Austria and Italy expressed interest in joining the task force. The Bureau agreed that civil society and the academic and research community will be represented on the task force by the civil society and the academic and research community representatives in the Bureau. In a first step, the task force will develop the modalities for a participatory approach involving civil society and the academic and research community, which will be implemented in a second step. Following up on the discussion, the Chair of the task force, with the support of the secretariat, will prepare the terms of reference, and invite members of SWGA to join the task force.
- Item 8: The Bureau expressed interest in providing inputs to the organization of the Regional ICPD30 Conference and asked the secretariat to explore the possibility of being represented on the advisory committee for the Conference.

- Item 9: The Bureau discussed the draft agenda and timetable for the sixteenth meeting of SWGA and asked the secretariat to explore the possibility of modifying the start/end times of the SWGA meeting to facilitate travel arrangements. Bureau members further agreed to explore the possibility of funding an evening reception on the first day to enhance opportunities for informal exchange between members of the group. The Bureau also agreed that the topic for Policy Brief No. 29 will be decided at the sixteenth meeting of SWGA. The Bureau welcomed the proposal by the secretariat to invite the Titchfield Group to report to the sixteenth meeting of SWGA. Finally, the Bureau agreed on the topic of exploring the possibility of developing a quantitative monitoring framework for MIPAA/RIS implementation.
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