



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

Geneva, 20–22 November 2024

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Work of the Bureau**Report on the sixteenth 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 in Rome (Italy) on 22 and 23 April 2024 and was co-hosted by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of Italy and the Italian National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies (INAPP). Bureau members from the following member States attended the meeting: Austria, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Türkiye. The representative from AGE Platform Europe participated on behalf of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the representative from the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (European Centre Vienna) represented the scientific community. The Bureau member from Georgia was unable to attend. Several representatives of the host country attended the meeting as observers.

2. Italy chaired the meeting. Following opening remarks by the Chair, representatives of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and INAPP welcomed participants and delivered opening remarks on behalf of the host country.

3. The Bureau adopted the agenda of the meeting without modifications.

II. Introduction by host country: ageing policies in Italy

4. The Bureau was briefed on a new legislative framework for ageing policies and the multilevel coordination of active ageing policies in Italy. Mr. Gianfranco Costanzo from the Presidency of the Council of Ministers presented the new legislative framework on ageing, including guidelines for the Government on the enactment of legislation related to population ageing and demographic change, new national plans for active ageing and on long-term care that will be regularly updated, as well the establishment of an interministerial committee for older persons. Mr. Andrea Principi from the National Institute of Hospitalization and Care for the Elderly (INRCA) presented on the coordination of active ageing policies across government ministries and agencies as well as government levels in Italy. He highlighted several best practices such as the engagement of a broad network of stakeholders from government and civil society at the national and regional levels and the exchange of experience between regional governments.

5. During the discussion following the presentations, members of the Bureau congratulated Italy on the development of the national guidelines, the establishment of the



interministerial committee for older persons and suggested these practices could serve as examples for other countries in the region. Bureau members acknowledged the importance of approaches employed by Italy, including coordination across levels of government, cross-sectoral collaboration and the engagement of various stakeholders including civil society.

III. Implementation of the programme of work of the Standing Working Group on Ageing of in 2024

6. The secretariat briefed the Bureau on completed and ongoing activities since the sixteenth meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing in November 2023, shared plans for upcoming activities, and discussed follow-up on decisions taken at the annual meeting.

A. Raising awareness on ageing and its implications for sustainable development and synergies with related policy agendas

7. Members of Bureau were briefed on events and opportunities in 2024 and 2025 to raise awareness on ageing and mainstream ageing into international initiatives and agendas, including the sixty-second session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development (February 2024), the fifty-seventh session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development (April–May 2024), the Summit of the Future (September 2024), the Beijing+30 review and regional conference (October 2024), the Second World Summit for Social Development (2025), the Global Coalition for Social Justice, and the Italian Presidency of the G7 (2024).

8. Bureau members acknowledged the need to capitalize on these opportunities and discussed strategies to further promote the inclusion of ageing in intergovernmental processes.

9. The Bureau agreed to share with one another information and updates related to international and regional processes to identify opportunities for mainstreaming ageing. The Bureau requested the secretariat to clarify procedures for official statements by SWGA to intergovernmental processes. The Bureau agreed to develop a joint briefing note on ageing for SWGA national focal points to share with ministries of foreign affairs and permanent missions to advocate for mainstreaming ageing across broader United Nations agendas. The Bureau invited Italy to update on ageing-related activities under the Italian presidency of the G7 at the seventeenth meeting of SWGA.

10. The Bureau was briefed on communications activities carried out by the secretariat to promote the work of SWGA and raise awareness on ageing, including through the new United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Statistical Division LinkedIn page.¹ To enhance visibility of the group, the Bureau requested the secretariat to develop a logo for SWGA, provided feedback on preliminary proposals, and requested the secretariat to share final designs with the Bureau for selection.

B. International cooperation and exchange of experience and knowledge

11. The secretariat presented the draft Policy Brief on Ageing No. 29 “Mental health of older persons” and noted that many pertinent policy examples were shared by members of SWGA. The secretariat informed the Bureau that feedback from Bureau members and other stakeholders would be incorporated before the publication of the policy brief by June 2024 and that a text file would be made available for translation into national languages.

12. The Bureau thanked the secretariat for drafting the policy brief and provided feedback on specific elements. Austria and Portugal indicated they would share additional policy

¹ <https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/unece-statistics/>.

examples. Austria offered to translate the next Policy Brief No. 29 into German. Portugal and Spain also offered to translate policy briefs into national languages.

13. The Bureau discussed the proposal for the 2024 In-depth Policy Discussion on the use and generation of evidence for ageing-related policymaking. Proposed to take place on the third day of the seventeenth meeting of SWGA, the morning would focus on the exchange of knowledge and experience and an interactive discussion would be held in the afternoon. The Bureau emphasized that national focal points on ageing (NFPAs) may not be experts on data and statistics and that for this reason discussion questions should not be too technical. The Bureau suggested that discussion questions focus on the data needs of policymakers and the challenges around using data and statistics for ageing policies. Türkiye volunteered to present results of the national ageing study and its implications for policymaking during the 2024 In-depth Policy Discussion.

14. The secretariat presented a short summary of the Policy Dialogue on Ageing on abuse of and violence against older persons held on 14 March 2024 as a side event to the 2024 ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. The secretariat also presented proposals for two additional online Policy Dialogues on Ageing in 2024 on topics agreed at the sixteenth meeting of SWGA: mental health of older persons in June 2024 and coordination of ageing policies across the government in September 2024. The Bureau agreed to the proposals for the 2024 Policy Dialogues on Ageing.

15. As follow-up to the decision taken at the sixteenth meeting of SWGA to facilitate peer learning visits between member States, the Bureau discussed next steps around peer learning activities including contacting NFPAs to gather good practice examples and expressions of interest, developing guidance for NFPAs on peer learning, and identifying possible hosts for peer learning visits during 2025. The Bureau suggested that expressions of interest could be made during the seventeenth meeting of SWGA in November 2024. Türkiye shared its positive experience of a peer learning visit to an age care facility in Switzerland in 2023. Spain and Türkiye offered to host peer learning visits during 2025.

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

16. The Bureau was briefed on the translation and dissemination of training products. Policy Brief No. 28 “Older persons in vulnerable situations” has been translated into German by Germany. A translation of Policy Brief No. 28 into Slovak is in preparation. The Online Course on Mainstreaming Ageing has been translated into German by Germany. Russian and Turkish translations of the course are in preparation.

17. The secretariat provided an update on the preparation of a Road Map for Mainstreaming Ageing for Uzbekistan. The secretariat also informed the Bureau of a request from Georgia to support the assessment of the availability of statistical data on demographic change, population ageing, and older persons. The assessment will be carried out in 2024 and will involve the review of available statistical data, the identification of data needs and gaps, the preparation of a statistical portrait based on available data, and the development of recommendations to improve existing data and address data gaps.

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

18. The secretariat informed the Bureau about the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in-depth review on ageing-related statistics that will be carried out during the second half of 2024 and presented to the CES Bureau in February 2025. As no member State has yet volunteered to lead the work, Bureau members were encouraged to ask their national statistical offices to support the review.

19. The Bureau reviewed draft terms of reference for the task force on the quantitative monitoring of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) and its Regional

Implementation Strategy (RIS). The objective of the task force is to guide the development of a framework of quantitative indicators to monitor the implementation of MIPAA/RIS at the national and regional levels. The framework will be developed in parallel to the revised RIS and piloted during the fifth periodic review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS in 2026–2027. As part of this process, the task force will contribute to the CES in-depth review on ageing-related statistics. The Bureau asked Portugal to chair the task force, and, with the assistance of the secretariat, to finalize the terms of reference, to issue a call for participation, to establish the task force and to report on activities during the seventeenth meeting of SWGA in November 2024.

20. The secretariat provided an update on the development of the Ageing Policies Database and presented the proposed wireframe for the database. The Bureau congratulated the secretariat on the progress made and commented on the significant benefit the database will provide for member States. The Bureau inquired about the process for updating the database when new policy instruments are adopted and emphasized the role of NFPAs as gatekeepers for policy updates from their countries. The Bureau discussed the value of the database as not only a repository of current policies in place but also as a historical archive. Bureau members suggested to include an indication of the MIPAA and/or Sustainable Development Goal associated with each policy instrument. After discussion, the decision was taken to use the proposed policy themes instead but to consider adding MIPAA goals internally for reporting purposes. The Bureau asked the secretariat to consider accessibility for persons with visual impairments in developing the database, and to encourage NFPAs to provide English-language summaries of new policy measures submitted for inclusion in the database.

E. Preparing for the fifth cycle of review and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy

21. The secretariat briefed the Bureau on the usual process and timeline for the periodic reviews of MIPAA/RIS and the plans for the upcoming fifth review. The upcoming seventeenth meeting of SWGA will include a discussion with NFPAs on how to approach the fifth review. During 2025, guidelines for the development of national reports will be prepared so that national reviews can be carried out between September 2025 and September 2026. The secretariat will prepare the regional synthesis report between October 2026 and spring 2027. The next ministerial conference on ageing will be held in 2027 and expressions of interest to host the conference will be invited.

22. Bureau members discussed how to approach the fifth review and the development of the national guidelines considering new tools including the Ageing Policies Database and quantitative monitoring framework. The Bureau highlighted the potential synergies between the national stakeholder engagement exercises in the context of the update to RIS and the fifth review and appraisal of MIPAA. Bureau members suggested that the complementarity of these processes be emphasized for NFPAs.

F. Updating the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

23. As Chair of the task force on updating RIS, Germany updated the Bureau on activities of the task force and presented the draft guidance for national stakeholder engagement exercises which covers formats and guiding questions, stakeholders to include, and practical information on the timeline of the process and how to share national results with the secretariat. The Bureau congratulated the task force for the development of the guidance and emphasized the importance of allowing countries to design and implement exercises according to their needs and circumstances. The Bureau suggested the addition of text to highlight how the outcomes of the exercises could be used to support the fifth MIPAA review and appraisal. Pending this addition, the Bureau endorsed the draft guidance.

24. The NGO representative informed the Bureau about the webinar series “An engaged civil society as engine for an age-friendly society: an international exchange”. The series is organized by the German National Association of Senior Citizens’ Organisations (BAGSO), in cooperation with ECE, the NGO Committee on Ageing Geneva and AGE Platform Europe. The series consists of six webinars in total, the first of which, “Voice of older people at the United Nations”, took place on 8 November 2023. The second webinar titled “Promoting civil and political participation of older person” took place on 18 April 2024. Bureau members congratulated BAGSO on the interesting and relevant webinars. The Bureau discussed how the webinar series could be leveraged to engage civil society in the process of updating RIS and suggested that future webinars could be future-oriented, include intergenerational dialogue or conversation with other stakeholder groups, or include breakout rooms for more interactive discussion. To strengthen the civil society network in the region, the Bureau asked the secretariat to contact NFPAs to identify key civil society partners in their countries.

IV. Follow-up on other decisions taken at the sixteenth meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing

A. Meeting of the Chair with the Economic Commission for Europe Executive Committee on 25 March 2024

25. The secretariat briefed the Bureau on the meeting of the SWGA Chair with the ECE Executive Committee at its 133rd meeting on 25 March 2024. The Executive Committee approved the programme of work of the population component of the Housing, land management and population subprogramme for 2024, as contained in document ECE/WG.1/2023/5. The Bureau and secretariat thanked the Vice-Chair (Germany) for making the presentation on behalf of the Chair (Italy).

B. Follow-up on recommendations of the 2023 evaluation

26. The secretariat reported on actions taken to respond to the 2023 evaluation of the Ageing – Phase III project. To strengthen the role and engagement of NFPAs, the secretariat has developed proposed terms of reference for NFPAs. To enhance the usefulness of project outputs for national policymakers, the secretariat has begun preparing summary versions with key messages of policy briefs and encouraging translation of policy briefs and other materials and tools into national languages. To strengthen the MIPAA/RIS review process, the secretariat will work with NFPAs to review the modalities for the fifth review and appraisal. To include cross-cutting issues such as gender, disability, human rights and climate change in the programming cycle more systematically, the secretariat will explicitly address such issues in road maps for mainstreaming ageing and policy recommendations and in any data-related work undertaken by SWGA or the secretariat. The secretariat developed checklists for policy brief authors and event organizers on how to address regional diversity and these cross-cutting issues which were reviewed and endorsed by the Bureau. To address the instability of funding and ensure continuity of knowledge, the secretariat will continue to engage in fundraising including through follow-up projects on ageing to which member States can pledge financial support. To encourage the sustainability of project results, the secretariat will encourage SWGA members to implement products in their countries including through translation into national languages and dissemination at the national level.

27. The secretariat presented the proposed terms of reference for NFPAs to the Bureau, which specify the role, appointment, period of service, responsibilities of and opportunities for NFPAs. The Bureau welcomed the development of terms of reference for NFPAs indicating their importance for giving legitimacy and clarity to the role. The Bureau proposed edits and additions to the terms of reference which were implemented and/or noted during the meeting. The Bureau asked the secretariat to finalize the terms of reference and to circulate to all NFPAs for comments. The Bureau also suggested that the Chair contact

member States currently unrepresented on SWGA sharing the terms of reference and inviting them to nominate an NFPA.

28. The Bureau discussed how to facilitate the onboarding of new NFPAs to promote their engagement with and inclusion in SWGA. The Bureau requested the secretariat to establish a procedure for onboarding new NFPAs. Bureau members suggested that an onboarding package could include a welcome letter from the Chair as well as a copy of the terms of reference for NFPAs. An online orientation meeting was also suggested, as was the official welcoming of new NFPAs at annual meetings of SWGA. Bureau members offered to serve as mentors to newly appointed NFPAs.

V. Preparations for the seventeenth meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing

A. Bureau elections

29. The secretariat briefed Bureau members on the upcoming Bureau elections. The Bureau agreed to initiate formal preparations for elections ahead of the seventeenth meeting of SWGA in November 2024. The Bureau agreed to expand its membership by two members and to elect an additional vice-chair during the years leading up to the Ministerial Conference as is the usual practice. Invitations to the seventeenth meeting of SWGA will include a call for Bureau candidates. Bureau members were invited to indicate their interest to renew their term on the Bureau beyond 2024.

B. Draft agenda

30. The Bureau discussed the proposed draft agenda for the seventeenth meeting of SWGA prepared by the secretariat. The Bureau agreed to include updates from civil society and the research community under agenda item 4. The Bureau also agreed to include briefings on the Summit of the Future and Second World Summit for Social Development under agenda item 4. The Bureau invited the secretariat to finalize the agenda and begin preparations for the annual meeting accordingly. The Bureau agreed to include an evening reception on first day of meeting and indicated their preference that a member State host the reception. The Bureau asked the secretariat to organize a (self-paid) dinner on the second day.

C. Topics for discussion groups

31. The Bureau discussed the proposed discussion topic of modalities for the fifth review and appraisal of MIPAA under agenda item 8. The Bureau endorsed the discussion topic.

VI. Financing the programme of work of the Standing Working Group on Ageing in 2025 and beyond

32. The secretariat briefed the Bureau on the status of financing for the SWGA programme of work in 2024 and the outlook for 2025. Bureau members discussed strategies for ensuring sustainable funding of activities through the Ageing Fund. The Bureau acknowledged the importance of sustainable funding for the continuity of work of SWGA and its secretariat. Bureau members acknowledged the availability of funds in their respective units and departments for supporting the programme of work but indicated procedural and political barriers to making contributions. The Bureau agreed to initiate a crowd-funding campaign in which the SWGA Chair contacts NFPAs and permanent missions in Geneva encouraging contributions to the Ageing Fund.

VII. Other business

33. No additional matters were raised.

VIII. Decisions and closing of the meeting

34. The secretariat summarized the main elements of the discussions and reviewed all decisions and action points. The Bureau adopted the draft decisions, which are provided as an annex to this report.

35. The Chair and the secretariat thanked the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and INAPP for generously hosting the sixteenth meeting of the Bureau in Rome. The Chair closed the meeting.

Annex

Decisions of the sixteenth meeting of the Bureau of the Standing Working Group on Ageing

<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Decision</i>
3 (a)	The Bureau agreed to share information and updates related to international and regional processes to identify opportunities for mainstreaming ageing.
3 (a)	The Bureau requested the secretariat to clarify procedures for official statements by SWGA to intergovernmental processes.
3 (a)	The Bureau agreed to develop a joint briefing note on ageing for SWGA focal points to share with ministries of foreign affairs and permanent missions to advocate for mainstreaming ageing across broader United Nations agendas.
3 (a)	The Bureau requested the secretariat to develop a logo for SWGA, provided feedback on proposals, and requested the secretariat to share final designs with the Bureau and SWGA for decision.
3 (b)	The Bureau recommended that the In-depth Policy Discussion 2024 on evidence-based policymaking should avoid being too technical and asked the secretariat to revise the proposed questions for the afternoon discussion to reflect the experience and expertise of NFPAs.
3 (b)	The Bureau agreed to the proposals for the 2024 policy dialogues on ageing.
3 (d)	The Bureau asked Portugal to chair a task force on quantitative monitoring of MIPAA/RIS, and, with the assistance of the secretariat, to finalize the terms of reference, to issue a call for participation, to establish the task force, and to report on activities during the seventeenth meeting of SWGA.
3 (d)	The Bureau asked the secretariat to encourage NFPAs to provide abstracts on new policy measures submitted to the Ageing Policies Database.
3 (f)	The Bureau endorsed the draft guidance for national stakeholder engagement exercises in the context of updating RIS, pending the addition of text to highlight how the outcomes of the exercises could be used to support fifth MIPAA review and appraisal.
4 (b)	The Bureau reviewed the terms of reference for NFPAs, proposed edits, and asked the secretariat to finalize and circulate to all NFPAs for consultation.
4 (b)	The Bureau requested the secretariat to establish a procedure for onboarding new NFPAs, including an informal “mentoring” programme for new NFPAs.
5 (a)	The Bureau agreed to add two members and nominate two vice-chairs in preparation of the next ministerial conference on ageing.
5 (b)	The Bureau discussed the proposed draft agenda for the seventeenth meeting of SWGA, agreed to include updates from civil society and the research community under agenda item 4, and agreed to the discussion topic of modalities for fifth MIPAA review. The Bureau invited the secretariat to finalize the agenda and begin preparations for the annual meeting accordingly.
5 (b)	The Bureau agreed to include an evening reception on first day of meeting and asked the secretariat to organize a (self-paid) dinner on the second day.
6	The Bureau agreed to initiate a crowd-funding campaign, reaching out to NFPAs and permanent missions encouraging contributions to Ageing Fund.