DG SANTE and ECDC webinar - 3 April 2020 - AGE Statement

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to share the work done by AGE.

As European civil society organisation representing older persons, the COVID-19 outbreak rapidly became our number one priority and we have a dedicated page on our website[1]. It includes links to reliable resources, good practices examples from our members and our key messages:

- firstly, **the importance of solidarity** to protect those who are the most at risk, and to support health and social care professional and any other workforce ensuring the continuity of essential services.

- secondly, while **physical distancing** is crucial to counter the virus, it shouldn't lead to further social isolation. Access to essential goods and services and human interactions are crucial for older persons and other persons in vulnerable situation.

- Thirdly, **older persons have the same rights as other and these must be protected during the pandemic.** We released a policy paper on human rights concerns for older persons in relation to the current crisis, covering notably the issue of triage or the situation of older persons in long-term care settings[2]. As reminded by Commissioner Dalli yesterday in her statement on COVID-19 and older persons, there is no place for ageism in the EU[3].

To conclude, it will be important in a near future to **reflect on investment in health promotion and disease prevention to make our health systems more resilient to such crisis.** Let's not forget about the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing to be launched on 1 October as one of the key opportunities to do so[4].

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[1] https://www.age-platform.eu/coronavirus-covid-19
[2] https://age-platform.eu/policy-work/news/covid-19-older-persons%E2%80%99-rights-must-be-equally-protected-during-pandemic
[3] https://twitter.com/helenadalli/status/1245615487616086018/photo/1
[4] https://www.who.int/ageing/decade-of-healthy-ageing