

Osnabrück Statement

The conference, *Strengthening the Rights of Older People Worldwide: Building Greater European Support*, brought together participants from 25 countries in Europe and worldwide on 5-7 December 2012 in Osnabrück Germany.

Over 100 representatives from older people's organisations, human rights organisations, development organisations, national human rights institutions, UN experts, government officials, European Parliament, Council of Europe, as well as legal experts, researchers, academics and older people themselves **affirmed that the rights of older people need to be strengthened globally and that new international human rights instruments are necessary.**

Participants recognised that civil society and political support for a UN convention on the rights of older persons is increasing across Europe and globally.

The Conference made clear the following fundamental points regarding the human rights of older people:

- Politics has not kept pace with the realities of demographic ageing and it is time to rethink legislation, policies and societal attitudes to ageing.
- Age discrimination is a fundamental gap in existing human rights legislation.
- Older people's rights are universal, yet the fragmented nature of international human rights legislation has allowed violations to take place and go unrecognised in all parts of the world.
- Existing international agreements on ageing, such as the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), are not binding and not sufficient to protect the rights of older people.
- International human rights instruments, such as a UN convention on the rights of older persons, are needed to make the human rights system more effective at addressing violations of rights and discrimination in old age. They would do this by improving understanding of the rights of older people, strengthening reporting mechanisms and enabling better monitoring of UN Member States' actions.

Participants at the Osnabrück Conference overwhelmingly recognised that political support within Europe is critical for achieving new international human rights instruments for older people and called upon European Governments and European Union institutions to do more to protect the rights of older people.

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This statement was developed jointly by Age Action Ireland, Age International, Community of Sant'Egidio, HelpAge Deutschland, HelpAge International and The Red Cross of Serbia on behalf of the conference participants.