Basic information

2020/2008(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Old continent growing older - possibilities and challenges related to ageing policy post 2020 **Subject** 4.10.05 Social inclusion, poverty, minimum income 4.10.07 The elderly 4.10.11 Retirement, pensions 4.10.14 Demography 4.15.04 Workforce, occupational mobility, job conversion, working conditions	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	SZYDŁO Beata (ECR)	08/06/2020
	Shadow rapporteur TOMC Romana (EPP) BRGLEZ Milan (S&D) ALIEVA-VELI Atidzhe (Renew) ŽDANOKA Tatjana (Greens/EFA) BILDE Dominique (ID) PEREIRA Sandra (GUE/NGL)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	FLANAGAN Luke Ming (GUE/NGL)	14/01/2020
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	ANDERSON Christine (ID)	19/02/2020

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	SCHMIT Nicolas

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
16/01/2020	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
27/05/2021	Vote in committee		
04/06/2021	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0194/2021	Summary
05/07/2021	Debate in Parliament		
07/07/2021	Decision by Parliament	T9-0347/2021	Summary

Technical information

Procedure reference	2020/2008(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/9/01676

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE657.302	11/09/2020	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE658.702	28/09/2020	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE658.865	09/10/2020	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE658.923	09/10/2020	
Committee opinion	AGRI	PE657.234	28/10/2020	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0194/2021	04/06/2021	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0347/2021	07/07/2021	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2021)598	26/11/2021	

Old continent growing older - possibilities and challenges related to ageing policy post 2020

2020/2008(INI) - 04/06/2021 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted an own-initiative report by Beata SZYDŁO (ECR, PL) on an old continent growing older – possibilities and challenges related to ageing policy post-2020.

Europe's ageing population is a demographic phenomenon which involves a decrease both in fertility and mortality rates and a higher life expectancy. Life expectancy is expected to rise from 78.3 to 86.1 years for men and 83.7 to 90.3 years for women between 2016 and 2070. The report stated that the current demographic situation has a severe impact on the social, economic and territorial cohesion of the EU. Therefore, it is important for the EU to mainstream demographic aspects into all of its policies. All policies addressing demographic opportunities and challenges must take an inclusive, rights- and evidence-based, people-centred approach, and must uphold the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

Combating discrimination against older people

A 2019 Eurobarometer survey shows that 40 % of people in the EU feel discriminated against on the grounds of age. Members stressed that valuing older people and tackling discrimination against them is only possible through social, cultural and economic inclusion policies which focus on providing fair pensions that ensure a good quality of life. They stressed, therefore, the importance of public social security systems that are distributive and based on contributive solidarity between generations, providing everyone, regardless of their own contributions (which is particularly relevant, for example, for women who have spent their careers working as carers), with a decent quality of life free from poverty and social exclusion.

The Commission and the Member States are called on to:

- strengthen their efforts to combat all forms of discrimination against older people, particularly against women, especially in the areas of employment, access to financial products and services, healthcare, housing, promoting autonomy, education, training and leisure activities;

- promote a positive perception of old age in society and the social inclusion of older people by stimulating age-friendly environments in the EU through appropriate measures, and to support the exchange of good practices at all governance levels and strengthen their support for the silver economy in the EU.

Members called on the Commission and the Council to establish a **Year of Intergenerational Solidarity and Active Ageing** complementing and building on the aims and spirit of the European Day of Solidarity between Generations and the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, in order to raise awareness about the problems older people face and promote strategies to mitigate them, as well as to eliminate stereotypes and prejudice, strengthen the links and solidarity between the generations, counteract social exclusion and address sexual health issues.

Long-term care for older people

The report highlighted that older women are more affected by the high costs of long-term care as women's life expectancy is higher, while their health outcomes at the end of life are lower, increasing their need for long-term care and assistance. Women make up the vast majority of informal carers, leaving in particular older women of working age with fewer opportunities to access the labour market and to build up their own pension entitlements.

The Commission and the Member States should adopt a uniform definition of dependence on the assistance of others, also taking into account the needs of informal carers. The Commission should put forward a **care deal for Europe and a European carers' programme** aimed at making the transition towards a care economy that entails relevant investment and legislation at EU level, taking a comprehensive approach towards all care needs and services and setting quality guidelines for care throughout the life course. Moreover, the report called for the adoption of an **EU strategy on carers**. Investment in care services is essential as it will not only increase women's employment rates, providing job opportunities in the formal economy for previously informal carers and promoting a work-life balance for women, but also improve the living conditions of older people through investment in long-term care facilities.

Active ageing

Members stressed that the creation and implementation of age-appropriate lifelong learning opportunities is a vital and indispensable element for enhancing social and economic sustainability and personal welfare. They stressed, in this context, the need to strengthen the digital skills of older people, which can help them not only to benefit from online education, but also improves their access to healthcare and other digital services.

Member States are called on to devote greater attention to older people, who are particularly vulnerable to viral infections, including COVID-19. There is also a need to combat isolation, neglect and social exclusion experienced by older people during the COVID-19 pandemic by promoting awareness-raising campaigns, conducting research, facilitating exchanges of views, and combining EU structural and investment funds. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for more solidarity from the EU and in this regard, the Commission is called on to devise and adopt an EU charter for the rights of older people on the basis of Article 25 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Old continent growing older - possibilities and challenges related to ageing policy post 2020

2020/2008(INI) - 07/07/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 479 votes to 103, with 113 abstentions, a resolution on an old continent growing older – possibilities and challenges related to ageing policy post-2020.

The natural change in the EU population has been negative since 2012, with more deaths than births in the EU, 4.7 million and 4.2 million respectively in 2019. The fertility rate in the EU has been declining, falling to 1.55 in 2018. The working-age population (15-64 years) is projected to decline significantly from 333 million in 2016 to 292 million in 2070. People aged 80 or over are expected to represent 14.6% of the population in 2100.

The current demographic situation has serious repercussions for the EU's social, economic and territorial cohesion. Members therefore stressed the importance of the EU mainstreaming demographic issues into all its policy areas.

Combating discrimination against older people

A 2019 Eurobarometer survey shows that 40 % of people in the EU feel discriminated against on the grounds of age.

Parliament stressed that valuing older people and tackling discrimination against them is only possible through social, cultural and economic inclusion policies which focus on providing **fair pensions** that ensure a good quality of life. It stressed, therefore, the importance of public social security systems that are distributive and based on contributive solidarity between generations, providing everyone, regardless of their own contributions, with a decent quality of life free from poverty and social exclusion.

The Commission and the Member States are called on to:

- strengthen their efforts to combat all forms of discrimination against older people, particularly against women, especially in the areas of employment, access to financial products and services, healthcare, housing, promoting autonomy, education, training and leisure activities;

- promote a **positive perception of old age in society and the social inclusion of older people** by stimulating age-friendly environments in the EU through appropriate measures, and to support the exchange of good practices at all governance levels and strengthen their support for the silver economy in the EU.

Members called on the Commission and the Council to establish a **Year of Intergenerational Solidarity and Active Ageing** in order to raise awareness about the problems older people face and promote strategies to mitigate them. The situation of older people should be taken into account when implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Long-term care for older people

The resolution highlighted that older women are more affected by the high costs of long-term care as women’s life expectancy is higher, while their health outcomes at the end of life are lower, increasing their need for long-term care and assistance. Women make up the vast majority of informal carers, leaving in particular older women of working age with fewer opportunities to access the labour market and to build up their own pension entitlements.

Parliament stressed the importance of:

- ensuring a decent life for dependent people through quality personalised support strategies that take into account the specific needs of people with different diseases, such as Alzheimer's and dementia;

- using flexible forms of work, allowing women and men to reconcile work and family life;

- ensuring equal access to health and care services, including at home, as well as to institutional and community care services and palliative care, without discrimination on any grounds;

- protecting the right of older people to affordable, comprehensive and quality care and support services that are adapted to their personal needs and promote their well-being, autonomy, independence and inclusion in the community.

Parliament called on the Commission to present an **EU strategy for the care sector** and a European carers’ programme. It called on Member States to better recognise the value of informal care and to introduce, in cooperation with the social partners, different forms of support to relieve family members caring for older people.

Active ageing

The resolution stressed that raising the statutory retirement age is not a timely response to the current economic and social crisis, as it may accelerate the deterioration of the fundamental rights of older workers.

Members believe it is essential to provide lifelong learning opportunities adapted to different age groups. In this context, they stressed the need to **strengthen the digital skills** of older people to help them take advantage of online education, but also to improve their access to healthcare and other digital services.

Parliament called for the digital divide to be bridged and for opportunities for labour market integration of older people to be explored, especially in rural and remote areas, in order to combat the depopulation of these regions and the social and digital exclusion of the older population living there. ESF+ and ERDF funds could contribute to the creation of quality jobs.

Member States are invited to ensure a **decent standard of living** for older people and to share best practices, in particular as regards the setting of minimum pensions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for more solidarity from the EU and in this regard, the Commission is called on to devise and adopt an **EU charter for the rights of older people** on the basis of Article 25 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.