



Joint AGE-ENAR position paper on older ethnic minorities and migrants as a contribution for EY2012

Older ethnic minorities and migrants: promoting their participation in employment, involvement in the community and independent living as a contribution to the European Year 2012 for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations

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1. Introduction

On the eve of the upcoming European Year 2012 for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, this joint position paper from AGE Platform Europe (AGE) and the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) draws attention to the fact that older people in the EU are very diverse and include a significant number of older people of migrant origin and older ethnic and religious minorities who face particular difficulties in our societies when they reach old age. The paper explores how the EY2012 can be used to highlight their situation and puts forwards recommendations for concrete policy measures to be taken at all political levels which would have a substantive impact in improving the situation of older migrants and ethnic minorities long-term in the EU.

AGE and ENAR are deeply concerned about the disadvantaged conditions, which increasing numbers of vulnerable older people of migrant origin and older ethnic and religious minorities experience in all aspects of their lives and the specific discrimination which often confronts them. We acknowledge how complicated and diverse the issue is and so we want first to define the parameters of what and whom we are addressing and to put our reflections within the context of the existing legislative framework and current EU initiatives.

This document will be followed by another joint AGE-ENAR paper later in 2012 where examples of commitments and initiatives taken across the EU in support of older people of migrant origin and older ethnic and religious minorities will be presented and further recommendations will be made to ensure a long-term legacy for the EY2012.

2. Terms of reference

“Ethnic and religious minorities”: Throughout the paper the term ethnic and religious minorities is used to define the broad category to which the report refers. Whilst no universally accepted definition of minority exists, the definition used by the International Organization for Migration will be used. This provides that: “a minority may be considered to be a group which is numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State and in a non-dominant position, whose members possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics which differ from the rest of the population and who, if only implicitly, maintain a sense of solidarity directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.”

“Migrant”: The term migrant, as used for the purposes of this paper, may include long-term and short-term migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees, stateless persons, spousal and family dependents, women migrants, and undocumented migrants.

“Third Country Nationals”: A person who is not a national of an EU Member State.

“Integration” is understood as a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States. It means that minority groups and the majority group develop a new way of living which includes elements of the values and ideas of both groups. Integration also means that everyone finds a place in society with full participation, on an equal footing, to the democratic, civil, social, cultural and economic life of the

community they chose to live in. Integration policies are part of the immigration-equation and while these are implemented at national level, the EU provides *Common Basic Principles*¹ underlining the importance of a holistic approach to integration.

3. Context of migration

Europe has long been a destination for many migrants. The European Union currently hosts around 31.8 million migrants, representing 6.4 per cent of the total EU population. The number of third country nationals in the EU represents 4 per cent of the total EU population. For the first time, Europe's ageing population includes significant numbers of ethnic minority people and migrants from a diversity of backgrounds. These large and significant groups within the EU will continue to grow in line with projected demographic trends towards an ageing population as migration is increasingly needed to sustain Member State's welfare states and social models and mobility will further increase between EU Member States and third countries.

However, we do not currently have a complete picture on the population and issues at stake and additional research is needed, in particular because, to date, most countries in the EU do not collect data disaggregated by ethnicity. If we look at the context in terms of ethnic diversity in those countries that do collect disaggregated data, the UK, for example, presents 11% of ethnic minority groups (2007) composed by 5.5% Asian or British Asian, 2.7% Black or Black British, 1.6% mixed, 0.8% Chinese and 0.7% other groups. Regarding age diversity, by 2028 one out of three people of all ethnic backgrounds, including BME (black and minority ethnic) people, will be aged over 50. Therefore, specific measures will be needed to provide for the old age of people belonging to ethnic minorities so that their needs can be accommodated to a greater extent and their rights better upheld.

Migration dynamics have changed enormously since the arrival of the first generation of migrants in the 1960s as a labour force. Since this evolved to situations of long-term residence and citizenship, a whole range of issues concerning not only 1st generation migrants (many of whom are now elderly), but also the 2nd and 3rd generation who were born or raised in host countries and who are now approaching mid-life need to be addressed.

4. Policy context

Unfortunately it is often the case that governments still tend to consider migration as a temporary phenomenon and, while there are some key initiatives looking at older migrants, their needs for adequate pension entitlements, health care, housing, etc. are not sufficiently addressed by those who can really bring about a difference from the policy level.

Both at European and national level, policies and strategies address either ageing or racism or poverty, but not the combination of issues facing many minority ethnic older people. Strikingly, most National Action Plans on social Inclusion (NAPs/incl) did not make any reference to minority ethnic older people as a specific group who are at a higher risk of social exclusion. In most national social and health care policies, specific measures to tackle

¹ Council of the European Union, *Common Basic Principles*, November 2004

social exclusion and poverty amongst minority ethnic older people are not included although significant progress in this area has been made by a number of local authorities and other stakeholders over the last few years².

The first ever conducted Eurobarometer on Migrant Integration³ showed that EU citizens and migrants agree that in order to make integration work more efforts are needed from the side of governments as well as migrants themselves and the general public. To do so, we need to consider the context in which older migrants are living (living conditions, access to essential services, problems of discrimination, cultural and inclusion issues...) and to demonstrate the need for a better understanding and consideration of older migrants social, health and cultural needs at all political and policy-making levels. We must also consider older migrants within the specific context of the demographic changes that our societies are facing and especially in today's very difficult economic context and the subsequent social impact that this crisis is having on society.

Moreover, older migrants have specific concerns and needs which are not always effectively met through the infrastructures in the countries in which they live. It is therefore essential to devise future economic and social policies - as well as migration and integration policies - that take sufficient consideration of the requirements of this vulnerable and diverse societal group, which is particularly susceptible to poverty and social exclusion, and that specific steps are taken to facilitate their social and economic inclusion.

Failure to acknowledge these realities would only serve to further isolate and marginalise this group of already vulnerable older people, resulting in increased segregation and further fragmentation of the communities in which they live.

The most challenging or vulnerable situations include: 1st generation migrants from 3rd countries (especially older women who are alone, widowed or divorced), 2nd and 3rd generations in mid-life (who in some countries are no longer considered migrants but who may have particular problems of integration linked to their family's migration history and to their duty to care for their elderly relatives), older people from 3rd countries who have joined their younger family members who are working in the EU under family reunification measures and who may be at particular risk of isolation, as well as older people from ethnic minorities such as older Roma⁴ who face many similar problems.

Additionally, the current EU approach to migration focuses on the economic necessity of highly skilled migration, but lacks recognition of the broader contribution that migrants have made and continue to make to European society. Those migrants not defined as 'highly skilled' are not recognised as having an economic value and their economic, social and cultural importance to European society is negated. Approaches which treat migrants merely

² PRIAE (2005), *SEEM II: Services for Elders from Ethnic Minorities - A Guide to Good Practice in the EU*, Leeds: Policy Research Institute for Ageing and Ethnicity, p. 3.

³ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/quali/ql_5969_migrant_en.pdf

⁴ The term derives from the Romani word for a man/person and is the traditional appellation for some, mainly Romani speaking group. However, some individuals and groups within this community prefer to use alternative terminology and self-identifications, which should be acknowledged and respected. The EU institutions are using the term "Roma" as an umbrella term to include groups of people who share more or less similar cultural characteristics, such as the Roma, Sinti, Travellers, Ashkali, and Kalé.

as economic units and not as human beings are inconsistent with European values of respect for human dignity, equality and fundamental rights⁵ and risk adversely affecting the success of integration and social inclusion policies aimed at migrants, including 'legally resident' third country nationals and ethnic minorities who are EU citizens. It is also important to differentiate clearly between the EU's need for migrants to compensate EU demographic ageing and economic migration which is caused by high levels of poverty in countries of origin. In both cases, the same core values need to be upheld.

5. Migrant's rights in the EU

The EU must provide protection to all persons living and working in its territory, irrespective of legal status and nationality, and fully implement and respect the Charter of Fundamental Rights, namely Article 21, which states that:

"Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.

Within the scope of application of the Treaty establishing the European Community and of the Treaty on European Union, and without prejudice to the special provisions of those Treaties, any discrimination on grounds of nationality shall be prohibited."

Equally, the two Equality Directives of 2000 should be adequately implemented and their provisions respected: the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC)⁶ and the Council Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.⁷ The Employment Directive prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in employment and occupation. Article 2 prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination and defines harassment as amounting to discrimination. Other key provisions of the directive include shifting of the burden of proof and the prohibition of victimisation. The Racial Equality Directive Implements the principle of equal treatment between people irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and gives protection against discrimination in employment and training, education, social protection (including social security and healthcare), social advantages, membership and involvement in organisations of workers and employers and access to goods and services, including housing.

All Member States of the EU have ratified most of the nine core international human rights treaties including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights⁸. Some have already ratified the latest adopted human rights instruments, namely the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CPED). All Member States of the EU are also bound by

⁵ ENARgy, EU migration policy: Is it fair? August 2008, Issue 25

⁶ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L0043:en:HTML>

⁷ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L0078:en:HTML>

⁸ <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/index.htm#core>

obligations regarding civil and political rights, set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Those obligations are upheld through the European Court of Human Rights.

Under core international treaties and the ECHR, States have obligations to protect effectively the human rights of everyone, including migrant workers and their families and including those who are undocumented. However, many concerns still exist regarding the enjoyment of human rights by migrant workers in Europe pointing to the need for an adequate framework to protect their rights in an effective manner.

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families⁹ (ICRMW) provides this comprehensive framework responding to the specific protection needs of migrant workers, including when they are undocumented. However, in Europe, only a few states have ratified the ICRMW. Several of the States party to the ICRMW include EU candidate countries but none are Member States of the EU. This is very problematic.

While international human rights instruments have remained broadly similar since the Convention was first conceived, the phenomenon of migration has undoubtedly changed. Indeed, there can be no doubt that current global conditions are significantly different from those prevailing in the 1960s and 1970s. It is equally true that one of the main symbolic strengths of human rights discourse lies in its claim to transcend the fluctuations and vagaries of particular contexts, and to provide a basic and secure status to *all* human beings, regardless of the situation in which they find themselves. Against this background, therefore, it is essential that Member States ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW).

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) also plays an important role in standards-setting and in promoting acceptance and adherence to core labor standards. It has approved two major conventions on migrants, Convention 97 (1949)¹⁰ and Convention 143 (1975)¹¹ that aim to regulate migration and protect migrants. ILO Convention 97 deals with international migration for employment, and opens with a call for free and accurate information for migrants. Its major provisions include non-discrimination in wages, benefits and social security, and union activities (Article 6). ILO Convention 143 deals with "Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers". Its Article 9 calls for "equality of treatment" in wages, social security and other benefits for unauthorized migrants who are employed.

The following ILO instruments also support the employment interests of older migrants: R86 Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised) (1949)¹², C111 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (1958)¹³ and R151 Migrant Workers Recommendation (1975)¹⁴.

⁹ <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cmw.htm>

¹⁰ <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C097>

¹¹ <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C143>

¹² <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?R086>

¹³ <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C111>

¹⁴ <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?R151>

6. Key challenges

According to a survey conducted among ENAR members in autumn 2011, a key challenge is the lack of information available on discrimination and other issues experienced by older ethnic minorities and migrants. ENAR members perceived employment and healthcare to be the two areas where older ethnic minorities are at greatest risk of discrimination. The main issues that they were confronted with concern poverty and language difficulties, followed by lack of access to social assistance and cultural barriers.

Furthermore, in several Member States, policy on immigration is influenced by the prevailing opinion, nowadays right-wing orientated. The rights enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights as stated in its clause about family life and the right of asylum are often neglected.

Discrimination / Infringement of fundamental rights

While older migrant workers face many of the same challenges as other older workers, their situation can be compounded by dual or even multiple discrimination on the basis of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and gender and by their life course.

Discrimination and infringement of fundamental rights has a transversal impact on all the other issues affecting older migrants. For instance, their lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, and for some the impact of irregular or temporary legal status, can impede older migrants and ethnic minorities from fully benefiting from social and community resources to express their grievances or protect their rights.

Furthermore, viewing migrants only as economic components has led, in some cases, to a crisis in race relations between migrants and host populations. Putting too much emphasis on the purely economic dimension negates the human aspect of migration. Regarding individuals as mere labour tools can lead to unforeseen problems, including discrimination and exploitation in different areas of their lives (including unintended and systemic discrimination, indirect discrimination etc). For instance, it can exist in the way in which services are organised to meet the needs of the majority population (i.e. lack of culturally adequate health and long-term care, lack of interpreters or materials in minority languages). Such indirect discrimination presents a barrier to inclusion not just because it can exclude older migrants from the services they need but because it can foster resentment and tension between and among both immigrants and host country populations.

Older migrants, like any other older person, should be accorded respect, equality and human dignity. Denial of such rights, whether covert or explicit, not only has a negative effect on the individuals concerned but also deprives our societies of the richness that older migrants can offer to our civic, political, social, cultural and economic life.

Equal access and opportunity in the labour market

Older migrant workers face the same problems of lack of access and opportunity in the labour market as any other older worker but this can often be compounded by racism, obsolete skills, lack of access to training and lifelong learning and history of working in the

grey economy, non-recognition of qualifications obtained in their home country, and de-skilling and segregation in industries that pay lower wages. In addition, lack of access to welfare benefits, adequate housing and pension rights, along with low levels of savings and other forms of financial exclusion, can compound poverty and lead to overall social isolation.

Unemployment was mentioned as a major concern in many of the ENAR national shadow reports on the state of racism in 2010, most notably by Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom.¹⁵ ENAR Finnish report 2010 for instance, highlights how the unemployment rate for immigrants¹⁶ stands at around 20% which, while marking a slight drop from previous years, remains twice as high as the national average.¹⁷

The EU Fundamental Rights Agency's EU-MIDIS study¹⁸ found that the average unemployment rate at the time of the interview stood at 12% with the highest rate being reported for Africans in Malta and the lowest for Russians in Estonia.¹⁹ Taken as an aggregate, the Roma community had the highest level of unemployment at 23%, followed by Sub Saharan Africans at 17%. The lowest rate of unemployment is experienced by Russians at 4%, followed by Central and Eastern Europeans at 5%, and ex-Yugoslavs at 6%.²⁰

When members of ethnic minorities did manage to find jobs, these often did not reflect their qualifications, as stated in reports from the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany and Malta.²¹ This reflects a number of issues, including difficulties in getting qualifications recognised, the need to take any jobs available, and a reluctance by some entities and companies to have ethnic minorities represented within better ranked positions.

Within employment, ethnic minorities continue to face discrimination and other problems. These include working under precarious or dangerous conditions (as reported in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Greece, Malta and Spain²²), lack of compliance with minimum standards set out in national legislation (Romania²³), lower wages (Bulgaria, Denmark, Greece, Malta²⁴), exploitation (Denmark and Finland²⁵), as well as the 'glass ceiling effect' for older women migrants.

Retired migrants face particular difficulties due to substandard living conditions and insufficient pension / national insurance contributions due to undocumented or incomplete employment records in the EU. The impact of pension reforms thus is felt particularly keenly by migrants with incomplete career paths, most of whom are usually women.

¹⁵ See Section V. i. of the National Reports submitted by Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom in 2010.

¹⁶ It is important to note that the EU-MIDIS Report sought specific groups within specific countries and hence did not gather a general impression of, for instance, the situation of 'immigrants' in a particular country.

¹⁷ Mashaïre, Percy, *ENAR Shadow Report 2009/2010: Finland*, (n.d: n.d, 2010), p. 11.

¹⁸ [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/eumidis_mainreport_conference-edition_en .pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/eumidis_mainreport_conference-edition_en.pdf)

¹⁹ These statistics should bear in mind the mode of selection of respondents in the different countries which may impact the likelihood of responses.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ See Section V. i. of the National Reports submitted by Czech Republic, Finland and Malta.

²² See Section V. i. of the National Reports submitted by Belgium, the Czech Republic, Greece, Malta and Spain.

²³ Nicolae, Valeriu (ed.), *ENAR Shadow*

Report 2009/2010: Romania, (n.d: n.d, 2010), p. 15.

²⁴ See Section V. i. of the National Reports submitted by Bulgaria, Denmark, Greece, Malta.

²⁵ See Section V. i. of National Reports submitted by Denmark and Finland.

Social inclusion

Older migrants and minorities are a vulnerable and diverse group, some of whom have limited command of the host language, are unable to build up substantial levels of savings and are subject to other forms of financial and social exclusion.

For example, many of the elderly immigrants and refugees who came to Denmark in the 1960s and 1970s and are very isolated from society, have forgotten the Danish language and suffer from ill health. There are nearly 20,000 elderly from ethnic minorities who need better care. They do not know their rights and often do not get the treatment they should, especially when visiting doctors or going to social welfare municipal offices. This can be avoided through the use of an interpreter but they are often denied this service. The Danish government has now totally removed this service. Many experts have warned that this 'financial cut' will result in people being given the wrong diagnoses, time consuming and prolonged treatment of cases, and increased public spending in the future. Another result is the use of children as interpreters, which is a violation of the UN Convention of children's rights and, furthermore, interpretation by family members is often of poor quality and also puts family relationships at risk.²⁶

Access to health care and LTC

In many ways, older migrants and older people from ethnic minorities face institutionalised racism and a higher risk of elder abuse in health care systems. They share the same difficulties that any ageing person may encounter, including suffering from dementia / Alzheimer disease that brings additional factors that cause them to lose command of their host country language as their condition deteriorates. Little is also known about genetic based illnesses of which many older migrants are victims.

These difficulties are often compounded by premature ageing due to harsh working and housing conditions, the difficulties of living in a hostile or non-inclusive environment and experiences of accumulated and current discrimination. In addition, long-term care facilities are not always adapted to the cultural, religious or linguistic needs of older migrants. Older migrants also tend to have a limited understanding how to access health and long-term care systems.

In this perspective, it is important to recall that social status has a considerable impact on health status and that social exclusion increases the risk of ageing in poor health. Migrants are often part of this group which means that their health care needs can be particularly pronounced.

Intergenerational solidarity in diverse societies

There is also a real economic and social cost to the country of origin resulting from brain drain and the cost of childcare and education of children left behind as well as the impact on the provision of care for elderly dependents who remain behind.

²⁶ ENAR Shadow Report on Denmark 2010-2011, to be published in March 2012.

In addition, in receiving countries, older migrants are often no longer being cared for by the younger generations as in the past due to women's participation in the labour market and older divorced or single women are particularly vulnerable. While family structures are evolving rapidly, social services and family assistance programmes are often focused on majority populations and can be insensitive to the cultural diversity of families in need of help nor take account of the importance of intergenerational solidarity among different communities.

Engaging migrant and ethnic minority communities in intergenerational solidarity initiatives together with majority communities is crucial and provides a means of breaking down harmful stereotypes by bringing communities closer together, dispelling myths and creating public space for dialogue which all play a role in easing racial tensions.

Migrant and ethnic minority communities are vibrant and have given rise to active associations for many years. Anti-racist associations are active and, more recently, migrant women have created their own European network²⁷ to strengthen their voice in migration/integration policies. These vast resources provide ample opportunities to engage migrant communities in future intergenerational solidarity initiatives.

7. Recommendations

Recommendations to the EU level

- Use the European Year 2012 for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations to raise awareness on the situation of older migrants and ethnic minorities;
- Make use of the renewed social OMC to address the social integration, inclusion and health care needs of older migrant who face additional difficulties in access to affordable health care services and eligibility to social protection systems;
- Monitor and seek to ensure that policy development at national level includes explicit mechanisms to address gaps in service provision for older people from ethnic minority ethnic groups;
- Undertake comparative EU research on the situation of older migrants and ethnic minorities in regard to poverty and access to services;
- Encourage Member States to collect disaggregated data on the situation of older migrants to enable a better assessment of their situations and design adequate policy responses;
- Engage and consult with migrant and ethnic minority organisations throughout the year and ensure that they are part of the consultation, design and targets for subsequent implementation of active ageing and intergenerational solidarity initiatives at EU level;
- Disseminate information and visibility of good practices and projects targeted at older ethnic minorities and migrants.

²⁷European Network of Migrant Women, <http://migrantwomennetwork.org/>.

Recommendations to the national level

- Facilitate and support migrant and ethnic minority communities to develop and expand intergenerational projects and initiatives and involve them in the design and implementation of initiatives to promote active ageing and intergenerational solidarity among migrant and ethnic communities;
- Tackle the persistent healthcare inequalities between different ethnic groups including through cultural sensitisation of health workers and develop a clear policy framework for service development for ethnic minority older people;
- Implement programmes to address the low levels of saving and pensions among ethnic minorities and migrants and other forms of financial exclusion which they face;
- Tackle the multiple discrimination faced by ethnic minority and migrants older workers in recruitment and employment and address the ethnic pay gap and problems linked to recognition of qualifications;
- Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW);
- Acknowledge the contribution of migrant and minority communities at the social, cultural and economic level through educational programmes, cultural events and intergenerational solidarity initiatives;
- Engage and consult with migrant and ethnic minority organisations and ensure that they are part of the consultation, design and targets for policies impacting on older ethnic minorities and migrants;
- Raise awareness on good practice examples of integration among older migrant and ethnic minority communities.

Recommendations to the regional/local level

- Develop a better relationship with minority ethnic communities and their representative organisations at the local level;
- Address cultural and gender stereotyping by creating public spaces for intergeneration and multicultural exchanges at the local level;
- Conduct awareness raising activities on fundamental rights targeted to older migrants and ethnic minorities;
- Housing societies should provide accommodation in attractive areas and not send ethnic minorities to socially deprived areas;
- Set aside separate sections for older ethnic minorities in old people's homes and activity centres and include those from ethnic minorities among the staff;
- Strategise ways to provide free language interpretation services, especially for the very old, at primary care clinics, hospitals and social services in areas where a significant number of ethnic minorities live.

8. Concluding remarks

Older migrant and older people from ethnic minorities have specific concerns and needs which are not always effectively met through the infrastructures in the countries in which they live. Their requirements differ according to their country of origin, religion and cultural background, reasons for migration, and individual experiences of integration, level of education and socio-economic status. Older migrants also frequently face typical challenges which can include an often limited command of the host language, a lower socioeconomic status than they might have held in their country of origin, social exclusion in its various forms, a lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, and discrimination and exploitation in the many different areas of their lives.

AGE and ENAR consider it is therefore essential that when devising future migration and social policies, EU policy makers take adequate consideration of the requirements of this vulnerable and diverse societal group which is particularly susceptible to poverty and social exclusion and that specific steps are formulated to facilitate their social and economic inclusion. We also maintain that an effective migration policy needs to be supported by a consistent integration policy which covers all age groups and that more inclusive social provisions must be developed. To be successful, the future EU approach to migration must endorse a life course approach that offers all migrants, regardless of their age, the same social and economic rights as the populations of the countries in which they reside. Such an approach must promote the full integration of older migrants in society whilst respecting and valuing their diversity. It must also respect their right to age in dignity and to choose the country in which they want to spend their retirement.

The inclusion of the needs of older migrants and ethnic minorities within all relevant policies is crucial. This is necessary because the population of older people with a migrant background is growing fast and necessitates specific solutions that respect and value their differing cultures, religions and beliefs. For these reasons, we propose to use the European Year 2012 for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations to tackle the needs and promote active ageing of older ethnic minorities and migrants. The engagement of the national and local levels to foster inclusion for all and to create a society for all ages, regardless of ethnicity or background, is crucial to achieving this goal.



The European Network against Racism (ENAR) is a network of some 700 NGOs working to combat racism in all EU Member States. ENAR is determined to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, to promote equality of treatment between EU citizens and third country nationals, and to link local/regional/national and European initiatives.



AGE Platform Europe is a European network of organisations of people aged 50+ and represents over 25 million older people in Europe. AGE aims to voice and promote the interests of the 150 million inhabitants aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness of the issues that concern them most.