

## **EFOS Action plan 2018 – 2022**

**Agreed in London on 26 April 2018**

In our Action plan for 2018 – 2022 we refer to the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its formulations: Older persons must be recognized as the active agents of societal development in order to achieve truly transformative, inclusive and sustainable development outcomes.

In later life, people reduce their working hours or stop working because of retirement options, health issues or family responsibilities.

The ageism is a persistent challenge—prejudice and discrimination towards older persons at individual and institutional levels—that undermines older persons' status as rights holders including their right to autonomy, participation, access to education and training, health and social care, security and decent employment.

Keeping the above in mind we (re)formulate **the EFOS goals** as:

1. Promoting high level education of older people alongside younger students or at special academies/universities for older people
2. Fostering of joint projects for older students throughout Europe
3. Fostering and securing the access of older people, including those without formal qualifications, to education at the highest level
4. Representing the interests of academic education for older people in politics and society
5. Fostering of autonomous national organizations with similar goals
6. Identifying possibilities of using the skills and expertise of older students for the benefit of science and society
7. Cooperating with other international organizations that support lifelong learning (LLL)

Agenda 2030 sets out a universal plan of action to achieve sustainable development in a balanced manner and seeks to realize the human rights of all people. It calls for leaving no one behind and for ensuring that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are met for all segments of society, at all ages, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable—including older persons.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, older persons themselves face multiple challenges that severely restrict their human rights and their contribution to society. (The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 12.07.2017)

## Focal points of EFOS in the forthcoming years

Based on the **right of older persons to have access to education it is very important in the EFOS framework:**

- to **protect the interests of older students** in the studies at the institutions concerning the elderly within Europe;
- to **cooperate with universities and their students** on a national and European level;
- to **exchange information** about the educational bodies that offer possibilities for continuing education for elderly learners;
- to **exchange life experiences** of seniors from their universities, communities, own families, cities and countries;
- to **research on the topics of senior's education** in the European framework;
- to **follow the EFOS traditions and directly involve the elderly** students in EFOS activities;
- to **keep the accustomed system of the international meetings** twice a year in varying European countries and offer possibilities to present own activities and exchange experiences;
- to **combine EFOS meetings with workshops. Encourage** participation of senior students of the hosting institution to assure meaningful discussions on important topics.
- to **recruit new institutions that focus on elderly learners** and education. Extend EFOS membership to European countries that are not yet represented;
- to **propagate senior education** in an active way like lobbying in the European Parliament in Strasbourg and the European Commission in Brussels, react to documents and politics of the EU and participate in national and international committees (Committee for Ageing in Vienna, etc.);
- to **build the image of EFOS** in one's own country as well as abroad (through attendance of international meetings and conferences);
- to **keep continuity in the EFOS membership** in one's own institution and find new responsible persons (successors) for the continuity of the membership.

## Conclusion

Population ageing together with related lifestyles changes. A fundamental policy and attitudinal shift on ageing and old age is therefore needed to reflect and promote the contributions of older persons to society. Instead of focusing on the negative aspects of ageing, the process of reaching out to older persons and overcoming marginalization and intersectional discrimination requires an integrated and multifaceted approach, including sensitization of power structures, investing in public education, enforcement of anti-discrimination, legislation and articulating in a compelling manner the gains for society if older persons are included in the development process. (Policy Implications for the 2030 Agenda).

We believe that these words will be put into practice by national and European politics and implemented in their supportive documents for the promotion of senior education all over Europe.

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1. The concept of "old age" is multidimensional, which includes chronological (based on a birthdate), biological (related to human body ability), psychological (concerned with psycho-emotional functioning) and social age (related to social roles such as grandparents).

This brief adopts the definition of the United Nations that uses 60 years or over to refer to older persons, while recognizing the diversity of older persons in terms of their needs, capabilities, lifestyles, experiences and preferences that are shaped by their age, gender, health, income, education, ethnicity and other factors.