



UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing

Policy Dialogue on

**Peaceful societies for all ages:
preventing and addressing violence against older persons**

14 March 2024, 13h30 – 15h00 | Online



Concept Note

Recent and ongoing crises in the region such as the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts, and cost-of-living pressures have contributed to an increase in violence against and abuse and neglect of older persons. Nonetheless, violence and abuse against older persons remains largely invisible and limited attention has been directed to this issue in the context of the 2030 Agenda.¹

A violation of fundamental human rights, violence against and abuse and neglect of older persons represents a barrier to achieving the 2030 Agenda in the UNECE region. Under in-depth review at the 2024 Regional and High-Level Political Forums on Sustainable Development, SDG 16 calls for peaceful societies, access to justice, and accountable institutions—aims that cannot be achieved without tackling the abuse of older persons. In her recent report to the Human Rights Council, the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons called upon States to “scale up efforts against abuse of older persons through effective prevention and protection measures, in particular in line with the United Nations Decade of Healthy

¹ Tackling abuse of older people: five priorities for the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030). Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

Ageing (2021-2030) and States' international human rights obligations towards the human rights of older persons.”²

Occurring behind closed doors in homes and institutions, shame, stigma, and physical or financial reliance on abusers often prevent older victims from disclosing or reporting abuse. Health and care professionals as well as other community members in regular contact with older persons play a crucial role in the prevention and detection of abuse and the empowerment and protection of older persons who are at risk of or have experienced abuse. Effective training—of professionals, carers, and volunteers—is therefore an important intervention in addressing violence against and abuse and neglect of older persons.

The online event, organized by the [UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing](#) in cooperation with the [Joint Programme on Ageing for Eastern Europe and Central Asia](#), will showcase the diversity of approaches in the region to training individuals who interact with older persons. Different target groups, methods, and aspects of training will be highlighted, including the identification of risk factors and signs of abuse, breaking down barriers to seeking help and reporting, and equipping individuals, groups and communities with tools and resources for response.

Emphasizing synergies with SDG 17, the event will demonstrate the importance of strong partnerships for addressing abuse of older persons and achieving sustainable development that leaves no one behind. It will highlight concrete actions from across the region that foster safe environments, lives lived in dignity, and full participation in society for older persons.

² United Nations, General Assembly, *Violence against and abuse and neglect of older persons: report of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Claudia Mahler*, A/HRC/54/26 (7 August 2023), available from undocs.org/en/A/HRC/54/26.

Programme

Moderator: Lisa Warth, Chief, Population Unit, UNECE

Opening remarks

Lisa Warth, Chief, Population Unit, UNECE

Violence against and abuse and neglect of older persons

Video message by Claudia Mahler,

Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons

Setting the scene: awareness, support and empowerment

Marie Beaulieu Ph.D.

School of Social Work at the University of Sherbrooke and Research Center on Aging of the Public Network of Health and Social Services, Sherbrooke, Canada

Panel discussion highlighting approaches to training in the UNECE region

- Minna-Liisa Luoma, Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare
- Cynthia Formosa, Ministry for Health and Active Ageing, Malta
- Nataša Todorović and Milutin Vračević, Red Cross Serbia
- Amalija Šiftar, ZDUS, Slovenian Federation of Pensioners Associations

Discussion with participants

Key takeaways and call to action

Yongjie Yon, Technical Officer, Ageing and Health
WHO Regional Office for Europe

Registration link

Registration:

<https://unece.webex.com/weblink/register/rd4ea24c664df42f547c3bdd1c9f3c26c>

Website: <https://unece.org/info/events/event/388368>

About

The event is organized by the [UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing](#) – UNECE’s intergovernmental body working to mainstream ageing, adjust to demographic change and create environments conducive to the full realization of the individual and societal potential of longevity. It is co-sponsored by partners of the [Joint Programme on Ageing](#) – the UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, WHO Europe, HelpAge International and the NGO Committee on Ageing in Geneva.

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