



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Cabinet of Vice-President Ms Dubravka Šuica

Member of Cabinet

Brussels, 25 May 2020  
AD/hk - Ares (2020)

Dear Ms Chabiera, Dear Mr Windfuhr, Dear Professor Dr Bodnar,

Thank you very much for your email of 28 April 2020 addressed to Vice-President Šuica expressing concern over the effects that the current pandemic will have on an ageing population. Vice-President Šuica has asked me to reply on her behalf. It is indeed unfortunate that this year's UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing has had to be cancelled, in particular given the vulnerability of elderly people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Commission has been working in close collaboration with the UN, and especially with the UN Economic Commission for Europe, with a view to fostering the role of older people in our society and upholding their rights. At the moment, our first priority is to guarantee the health and safety of everyone, protecting people from the spread of COVID-19, supporting the health systems and health workers while maintaining the flow of goods<sup>1</sup>, mitigating the effects on the economy<sup>2</sup>, and helping people get back to their homes.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_20\\_468](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_468)

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_459](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_459)

Ms Anna Chabiera  
Senior Specialist, Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights  
Mr Michael Windfuhr  
Vice-Chair, German Institute of the Human Rights  
Professor Dr Adam Bodnar  
Commissioner for Human Rights, Republic of Poland

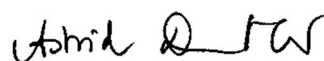
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Beyond those immediate crisis response measures, we are however also looking into the medium and long-term effects on elderly people and an ageing society. Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, Dubravka Šuica, will be preparing a Report on the impact of demographic change in Europe. This will be followed by a Green Paper on ageing which will launch a wide debate on long-term impacts, notably on care and pensions, and on how to foster active ageing. Undoubtedly, the effects and lessons from the current COVID-19 pandemic will play an important role in this Green Paper. Further, the Vice-President is planning to look into other issues of concern that you raised also in your letter. This includes in particular the isolation of elderly people in the wake of necessary social distancing measures and the impacts of loneliness on individual well-being but also on the economy and society as a whole.

For next year, the Commission also plans to present an action plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights, which has several principles in relation to supporting older people.

Although the current pandemic has delayed the launch of these initiatives, we will be able to advance with them in the coming months. Therefore, I encourage you to contribute with your knowledge and experience to the related consultation and look forward to receiving your input on this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Astrid Dentler'.

Astrid Dentler