



Hanover Declaration

All of us. Together.

Declaration by BAGSO and its 125 member organisations on the occasion of the 13th German Senior Citizens' Day 2021

The world is changing. Mankind is faced with tremendous challenges. The pandemic, climate change, armed conflicts and social disruption are unsettling and frightening for many. What used to be familiar is disappearing and long-held convictions are being shaken. The solutions that were once considered time-tested seem to be no longer working. Politicians, the business world and society at large are challenged to develop new solutions. As older people, we feel the responsibility to make our contribution.

We consider it a blessing to be able to grow old in this society



In the course of our lives, we as older persons have been able to gain a wealth of experience. We have witnessed both success and failure, and assess the world today based on the knowledge and insights we have derived from this experience. And despite all the difficulties and deficiencies of old age, we know that it is a blessing to be able to grow old in this society.

During our professional lives, we contributed to scientific and technological achievements, and to the development of services and products that will contribute to our society's productivity for many years to come. In family and care work, women in particular have been heavily engaged. Many among us continue to share their knowledge and skills in old age and take part in the education of younger people or

in the preservation of our country's cultural and social infrastructure. We take pride in our lifetime achievements.

The majority of us older people are enjoying a life of freedom and material security. We lead longer lives than previous generations and enjoy better conditions to cope with the burdens of old age than the generation of our parents and grandparents. Many of us are fit and active, even if they have to deal with physical or mental impairments. Having left behind the obligations and burdens of employment and family work, we are now open to new things. A well-developed health care system helps us cope with illness and impairments, and our welfare state provides security and protects most of us from poverty and hardship. Support structures are also in place for periods of long-term care and for the last phase of life, although they urgently need to be improved.

Most of us lead self-determined lives




During the Covid-19 crisis, older people were generally labelled as a "risk group", which made many justifiably feel discriminated against. We are grateful for the necessary efforts to protect the most vulnerable. Nursing staff often had to work far beyond the limits of what can be reasonably expected. However, decisions by policy-makers and institutional directors often led to an overprotection and a considerable restriction and in parts even massive

violation of the basic rights of persons in inpatient facilities – up to the point that people were not permitted to say their last farewells when life came to an end. This must never happen again.

It is true that the increasing number of very old persons has led to a growing need for help and protection for us older people. But most of us lead self-determined lives. Many are actively involved in the everyday life in our neighbourhoods and communities and contribute on a voluntary basis. Quite a few of us take on caring duties for relatives and friends, relieving the burden and supporting the younger ones in their own family with their time and often also material resources. Not least, we thereby help the middle generations to perform their duties in the workplace.

The years bestowed upon us also extend the time we can be there for our children, grandchildren and often great-grandchildren. Never before have older and younger people been able to live together and share experiences for such a long time as they do today; never before has the relationship between the generations in families been as at ease as it is today. We are privileged to see the generations of our children and grandchildren grow up and we hope for them to have a good life.

We seek to contribute to the preservation of the foundations of life and to greater justice



We recognise that the way of life and the economic system of the last decades have put the future of our planet at risk and that, if we do not act fast, this will deny future generations opportunities for a decent life. As inhabitants of industrialised countries, we are living beyond our means. That is why we share the concern of many young people over climate change and support their struggle for better and more sustainable ways of living and for intergenerational justice. Our democracy offers room for that. We strongly encourage the younger generation to seek and pursue their own path. But since climate protection is a task for all generations that requires the inclusion of all perspectives, we wish to remain in dialogue with the younger generations and face the challenge jointly with them.

We know that opportunities in life are unequally distributed around the globe, and that our prosperity must no longer be at the expense of people in the global South. We are also aware that the impacts such as lack of resources, hunger and migration are affecting us as well. With our behaviour, we as older persons seek to contribute to a fairer world. It is our responsibility to pass on to our children and to young people an understanding of a world community based on solidarity and a life in peace and shared prosperity.

In Germany, too, the opportunities in life continue to be unequally distributed. Many of us are much better off in old age compared to the generation of our parents and grandparents. But this is not true for all. For quite a few among us, low wages and interrupted employment biographies lead to poverty in old age. This affects women in particular, who take on most of the family and care work. We also see with concern that the younger generations are growing into a work environment that makes it difficult to plan their lives reliably. And we observe with growing unease that many people are turning away from rationality and sound science, and that prejudice, hatred and social division are on the rise. In response to these developments, we will continue to work with confidence and mutual trust towards a society that provides equal opportunities and development chances for all, regardless of the generation or social group they belong to.

With our engagement we contribute to a society based on solidarity



As older people, we wish to contribute our rich experience to the shaping of a sustainable and liveable future and make our contribution to a vibrant civil society. Even today, many of us are already involved to a large extent in voluntary work, for instance in reading or training mentoring, in community housing projects or neighbourhood initiatives, providing

assistance to very old persons, as trainers in sports clubs, in local seniors citizens' representations, in cultural mediation or as Internet guides, in refugee work, in peace and environmental groups or at food banks. Without this voluntary engagement, many clubs, associations, trade unions, church congregations and initiatives could not carry out their work. We enjoy the freedom from the obligations of middle age and are happy to contribute our skills and experience. This engagement is a contribution to intergenerational justice and to a society based on solidarity. It is in the municipalities that such participation structures must be promoted and coordinated.

We know that we, too, have to keep learning and broadening our skills, not only for our own lives in old age, but also for the benefit of future generations. Lifelong learning enables us to help shape the future.

We consider the diversity in our society to be both an asset and a challenge



As older people, we want to lead our lives in a self-determined way and on our own terms. We do not wish to be forced into fixed roles. We all experience the life phase of old age differently and expect to be given leeway and opportunities for an active lifestyle, but also thoughtfulness, support and help in dealing with restrictions.

The diversity in our society is also reflected in our age group: We have people with different life stories, with or without different cultural backgrounds, with or without disabilities, with different sexual identities and orientations, people in precarious life situations or with a secure income, people with different educational qualifications and people with or without support needs. We do not want anyone to be discriminated against or neglected, and want barriers of all kinds to be removed to enable participation for all.

The proportion of people with migratory background will continue to increase in the coming years. We consider the increasing diversity, especially the cultural diversity, to be an asset. But diversity is also a challenge: A society founded on freedom must balance different interests, learn new ways, question old habits and search for what is common and unifying. As older people, we feel a special responsibility for the preservation of democracy.

Our motto is:
"All of us. Together."



A society of long life should not be a society of burdens and impairments, but a society of new opportunities and chances. Seizing them is the order of the day. The success of this endeavour also depends on us older people.

Already today, we practise tolerance and empathy, open-mindedness, solidarity and mutual support with many millions of people who have come together in the associations of BAGSO – and not only for our own generation. We use the "late freedom" to get actively involved in shaping our society. We do this out of our own initiative, and it has shown us that we are needed.

We encourage all generations to join in and shape our world together:
All of us. Together.

Hanover, 25th November 2021

The 125 BAGSO associations (last updated: Nov 2021)

Alevitische Gemeinde Deutschland e.V. | Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bundesverband e.V. (AWO) |
 Arbeitsgemeinschaft SPD 60 plus | BDZ – Deutsche Zoll- und Finanzgewerkschaft – Ständi-
 ger Ausschuss Senioren | Betreuungswerk Post Postbank Telekom (BeW) | Bischöfliches Hilfs-
 werk MISEREOR e.V. | Bund Deutscher Amateurtheater e.V. (BDAT) | Bund Deutscher Forstleute
 (BDF) – Seniorenvertretung des BDF | Bund Deutscher Kriminalbeamter (bdk) | Bundes-
 arbeitsgemeinschaft der Landesseniorenvertretungen e.V. (BAG LSV) | Bundesarbeitsgemein-
 schaft Senioren der Partei DIE LINKE | Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Seniorenbüros e.V. (BaS) |
 Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft *seniorTrainerin* (BAG sT) | Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wissen-
 schaftliche Weiterbildung für Ältere (BAG WiWA) in der DGWF e.V. | Bundesarbeitsgemein-
 schaft Wohnungsanpassung e.V. | Bundesarbeitskreis ARBEIT UND LEBEN e.V. | Bundesforum
 Katholische Seniorenarbeit (BfKS) | Bundesforum Männer – Interessenverband für Jungen,
 Männer & Väter e.V. | Bundesinteressenvertretung für alte und pflegebetroffene Menschen
 e.V. (BIVA–Pflegeschutzbund) | Bundesinteressenvertretung schwuler Senioren e.V. (BISS) |
 Bundesselbsthilfeverband für Osteoporose e.V. (BfO) | Bundesverband Gedächtnistraining e.V.
 (BVGT) | Bundesverband Geriatrie e.V. | Bundesverband Information & Beratung für NS–Ver-
 folgte e.V. | Bundesverband Liberale Senioren | Bundesverband Russischsprachiger Eltern e.V.
 (BVRE) | Bundesverband Seniorentanz e.V. (BVST) | Dachverband Lesben und Alter e.V. | Das
 Demographie Netzwerk e.V. (ddn) | dbb beamtenbund und tarifunion | DeJaK–Tomonokai
 e.V. (Deutsch–japanischer Verein für kultursensible Pflege) | DENISS e.V. – Deutsches Netz-
 werk der Interessenvertretungen von Senior–Studierenden | Deutsche Alzheimer Gesellschaft
 e.V. – Selbsthilfe Demenz | Deutsche Evangelische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Erwachsenenbil-
 dung e.V. (DEAE) | Deutsche Gesellschaft für AlterszahnMedizin e.V. (DGAZ) | Deutsche Gesell-
 schaft für Hauswirtschaft e.V. (dgh) | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Palliativmedizin e.V. | Deutsche
 Justiz–Gewerkschaft (DJG) | Deutsche Landsenioren e.V. (DLS) | Deutsche Psychotherapeuten-
 Vereinigung e.V. (DPTv) | Deutsche Schmerzgesellschaft e.V. | Deutsche Steuer–Gewerkschaft
 – Bundessenorenvertretung (DSTG) | Deutscher Akademikerinnenbund e.V. (DAB) | Deutscher
 Berufsverband für Soziale Arbeit e.V. – SeniorInnen–DBSH | Deutscher Blinden- und Sehbe-
 hindertenverband e.V. (DBSV) | Deutscher Bridge–Verband e.V. (DBV) | Deutscher Bundeswehr-
 Verband e.V. (DBwV) | Deutscher Evangelischer Frauenbund e.V. (DEF) | Deutscher Evangelischer
 Verband für Altenarbeit und Pflege e.V. (DEVAP) | Deutscher Frauenrat – Lobby der Frauen in
 Deutschland e.V. (DF) | Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB) | Deutscher Olympischer Sport-
 bund (DOSB) | Deutscher Schwerhörigenbund e.V. (DSB) | Deutscher Senioren Ring e.V. (DSR) |
 Deutscher Turner–Bund (DTB) | Deutscher Verein der Blinden und Sehbehinderten in Studium
 und Beruf e.V. (DVBS) | Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge e.V. (dv) | Deut-
 sches Sozialwerk e.V. (DSW) | DPoIG Bundespolizeigewerkschaft | Eisenbahn- und Verkehrs-
 gewerkschaft (EVG) | Evangelische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Altenarbeit in der EKD (EAfA) |
 Evangelisches Seniorenwerk – Bundesverband für Frauen und Männer im Ruhestand e.V.

(ESW) | Familienbund der Katholiken (FDK) | Forschungsinstitut Geragogik e.V. (FoGera) | FORUM Gemeinschaftliches Wohnen e.V., Bundesvereinigung (FGW) | Freunde alter Menschen e.V. | Generationsbrücke Deutschland | Gesellschaft für Gehirntaining e.V. (GfG) | Gesellschaft für Prävention e.V. (GPev) | GesundheitsAkademie e.V. | Gewerkschaft der Polizei (GdP) – Seniorengruppe (Bund) | Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft – BundesSeniorenAusschuss (GEW BSA) | Greenpeace e.V. Team50plus | GRÜNE ALTE (GA) | Grüne Damen und Herren, Evangelische Kranken- und Alten-Hilfe e.V. (eKH) | Guttempler in Deutschland e.V. | Hartmannbund – Verband der Ärztinnen und Ärzte Deutschlands e.V. | Haus im Park der Körber-Stiftung | HelpAge Deutschland e.V. (HAD) | IG Metall | Industriegewerkschaft Bauen-Agrar-Umwelt (IG BAU) | Internationaler Bauorden – Deutscher Zweig e.V. – Verein „Senioren im Bauorden“ (IBO) | Internationaler Bund (IB) Freier Träger der Jugend-, Sozial- und Bildungsarbeit e.V. | Katholische Arbeitnehmer-Bewegung Deutschlands e.V. (KAB) | Katholische Erwachsenenbildung Deutschland – Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft e.V. (KEB) | Katholische Frauengemeinschaft Deutschlands – Bundesverband e.V. (kfd) | Katholischer Deutscher Frauenbund e.V. (KDFB) | Kneipp-Bund e.V. | Kolpingwerk Deutschland | komba gewerkschaft – Gewerkschaft für den Kommunal- und Landesdienst | Kommunikationsgewerkschaft DPV (DPVKOM) | Kompetenzzentrum für Kulturelle Bildung im Alter und Inklusion (kubia) | KWA Kuratorium Wohnen im Alter gemeinnützige AG | Lange Aktiv Bleiben Neu Wulmstorf e.V. | Malteser Hilfsdienst e.V. | Mediengemeinschaft für blinde, seh- und lesebehinderte Menschen e.V. (Medibus) | NATUR UND MEDIZIN e.V. – Fördergemeinschaft der Karl und Veronica Carstens-Stiftung | NaturFreunde Deutschlands e.V. – Verband für Umweltschutz, sanften Tourismus, Sport und Kultur | NAV-Virchow-Bund – Verband der niedergelassenen Ärzte Deutschlands e.V. | Netzwerk-Osteoporose e.V. | PRO RETINA Deutschland e.V. – Selbsthilfevereinigung von Menschen mit Netzhautdegenerationen | Projekt 50 Bundesverband e.V. – Verein zur Förderung brachliegender Fähigkeiten | Senior Experten Service (SES) – Stiftung der Deutschen Wirtschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH | Senioren-Union der CDU Deutschlands | Senioren-Union der CSU | Seniorenvereinigung des Christlichen Jugenddorfwerkes Deutschlands e.V. (CJD) | Seniorpartner in School – Bundesverband e.V. (SiS) | Sozialverband Deutschland e.V. (SoVD) | Sozialverband VdK Deutschland e.V. | Sozialwerk Berlin e.V. | Stiftung BSW (Bahn-Sozialwerk) | Stiftung der Deutschen Lions | Unionhilfswerk Landesverband Berlin e.V. | Verband Bildung und Erziehung e.V. (VBE) | Verband der Beamten und Beschäftigten der Bundeswehr e.V. (VBB) | Verband Wohneigentum e.V. | Verbraucherzentrale Nordrhein-Westfalen e.V. | Verkehrsclub Deutschland e.V. (VCD) | Virtuelles und reales Lern- und Kompetenz-Netzwerk älterer Erwachsener e.V. (ViLE) | Volkssolidarität Bundesverband e.V. (VS) | VRFF Die Mediengewerkschaft | wir pflegen – Interessenvertretung und Selbsthilfe pflegender Angehöriger e.V. | wohnen im eigentum – die wohneigentümer e.V. | WQ4 – Verein zur Förderung der Quartiersentwicklung e.V. | ZWAR e.V. – Zwischen Arbeit und Ruhestand

More information at: www.bagso.de

Published by

BAGSO
German National Association
of Senior Citizens' Organisations

Noeggerathstr. 49
53111 Bonn
Tel. +49 (0)228 / 24 99 93-0
kontakt@bagso.de
www.bagso.de

facebook.com/bagso.de
twitter.com/bagso_de