# Healthy Ageing in the European Region

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**World Health Organization**
European Region

#HealthyAgeing | @UNDecadeAgeing

# Decade of healthy ageing

#AddingLifeToYears

# Population ageing has been accelerating in the WHO European Region

Europe has the highest median age of all Regions in the world

In 2024, the number of people 65+ will exceed the number of people <15 years

The 80+ population is the fastest growing age group
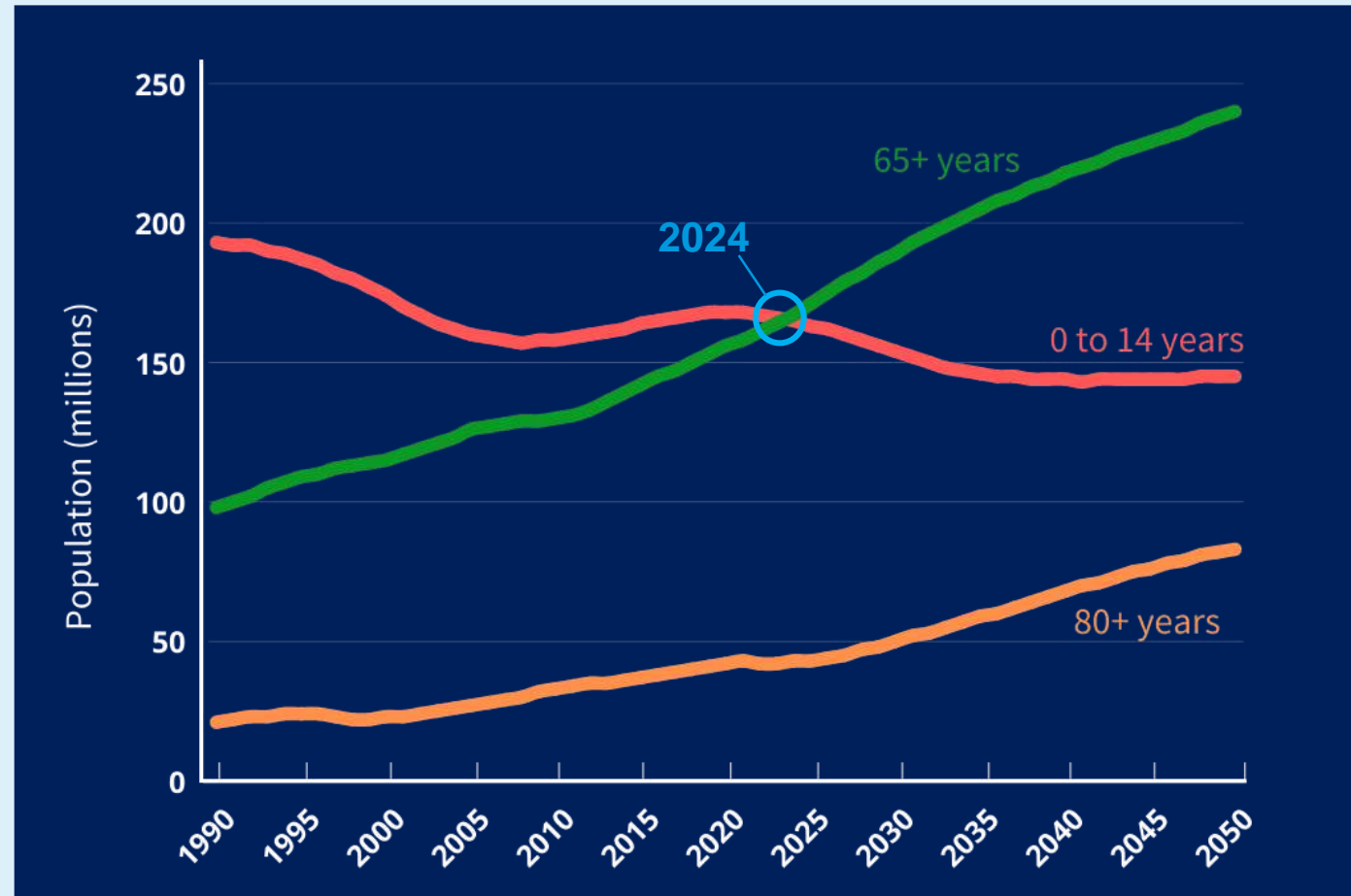


**Population by age groups from 1990 to 2050**
Sources: World Population Prospects 2022 (UN DESA (2022).

**World Health Organization**
European Region

# Older people bore the brunt of the pandemic in Europe

**2.8** million
Excess deaths among people 60+ associated with the pandemic in 2020 and 2021 in the European Region

**200 000**
Cumulative number of deaths attributable to Covid-19 among nursing home residents in EU countries

## Older people were heavily affected by:


Interruptions of health & social services


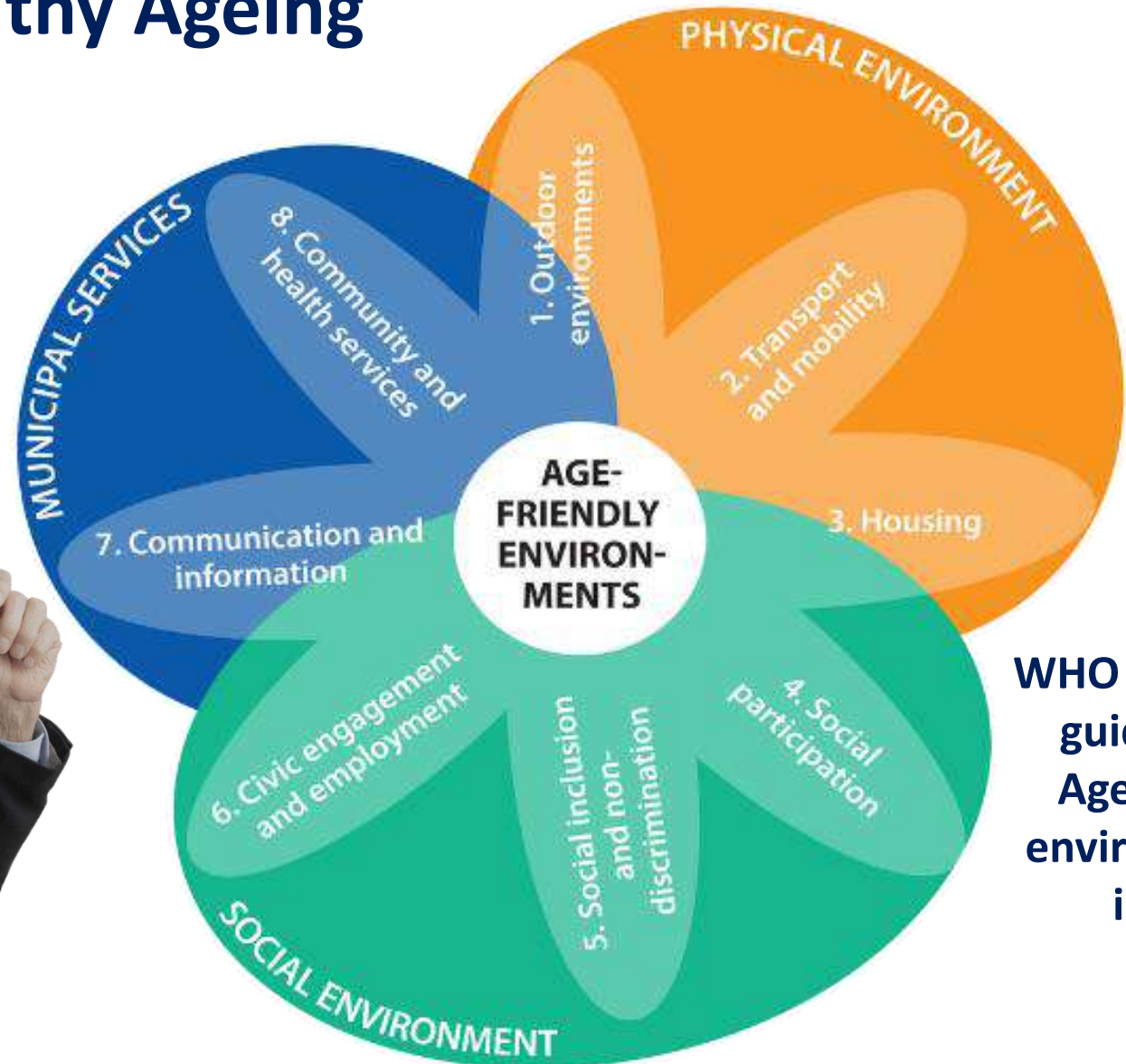Loneliness and social isolation


Declines in mental health

**World Health Organization**

European Region

# Intersectoral and multi-level initiatives are at the heart of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing



**WHO provides guidance on Age-friendly environments in Europe**

World Health Organization

European Region

# WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities

The **mission** of the Network is to stimulate and enable cities and communities to become age-friendly by:

- **inspiring** change by showing what can be done and how it can be done;

- **connecting** cities and communities to facilitate the exchange of information, knowledge and experience; and

- **supporting** cities and communities to find appropriate innovative and evidence-based solutions.



**Find out more:** https://bit.ly/3yMJ9YO

World Health Organization
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WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities

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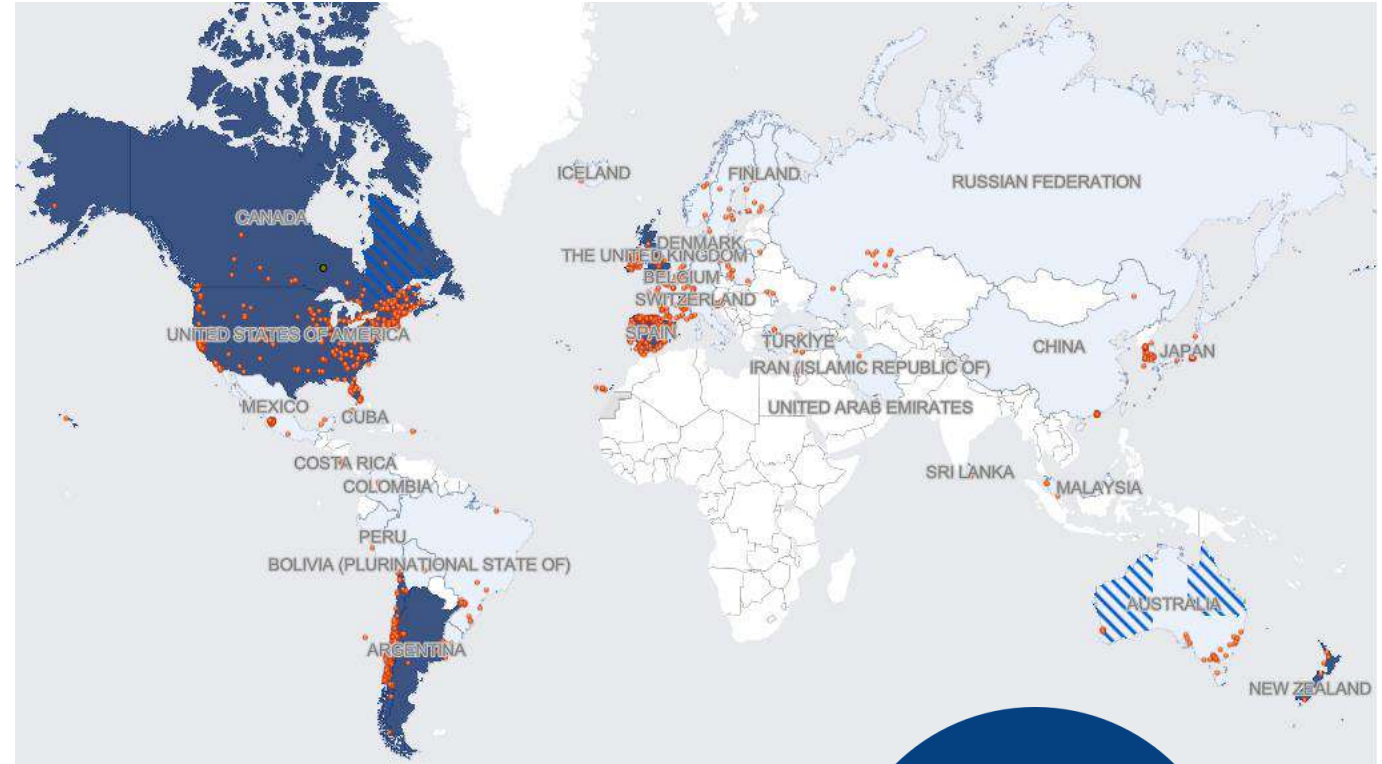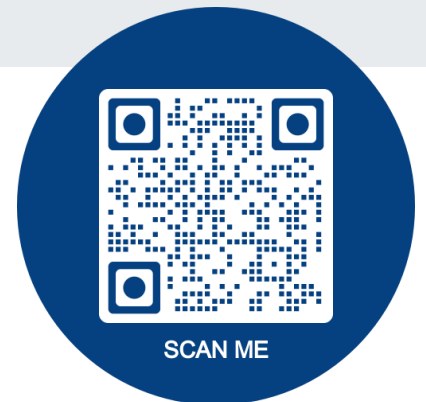
# Guidance for National Programmes for Age-friendly Cities and Communities

## Global Network Affiliate list (as of 10.02.2023)

**Sub-national:**

- Governnment of Queensland (Australia)

- Government of Western Australia (Australia)

- Municipalités (& Villes) Amies des Aînés (MADA) (Québec, Canada)

- Kanagawa Prefectural Government (Japan)

**National:**

- AARP Network of Age-friendly Communities (USA)

- Age-friendly Ireland (Ireland)

- Centre of Ageing Better (UK) and the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities (UK)

- Government of New Zealand

- Government of Singapore

- National Institute of Social Services for Retirees and Pensioners (Argentina)

- Older People's Commissioner for Wales (UK)

- Pan-Canadian Age-friendly Communities Initiative (Canada)

- Servicio Nacional del Adulto Mayor (SENAMA) (Chile)

- Spanish National Programme on Age-friendly Cities (Spain)

**Regional:**

- AGE Platform Europe

- Covenant for Demographic Change (Europe)
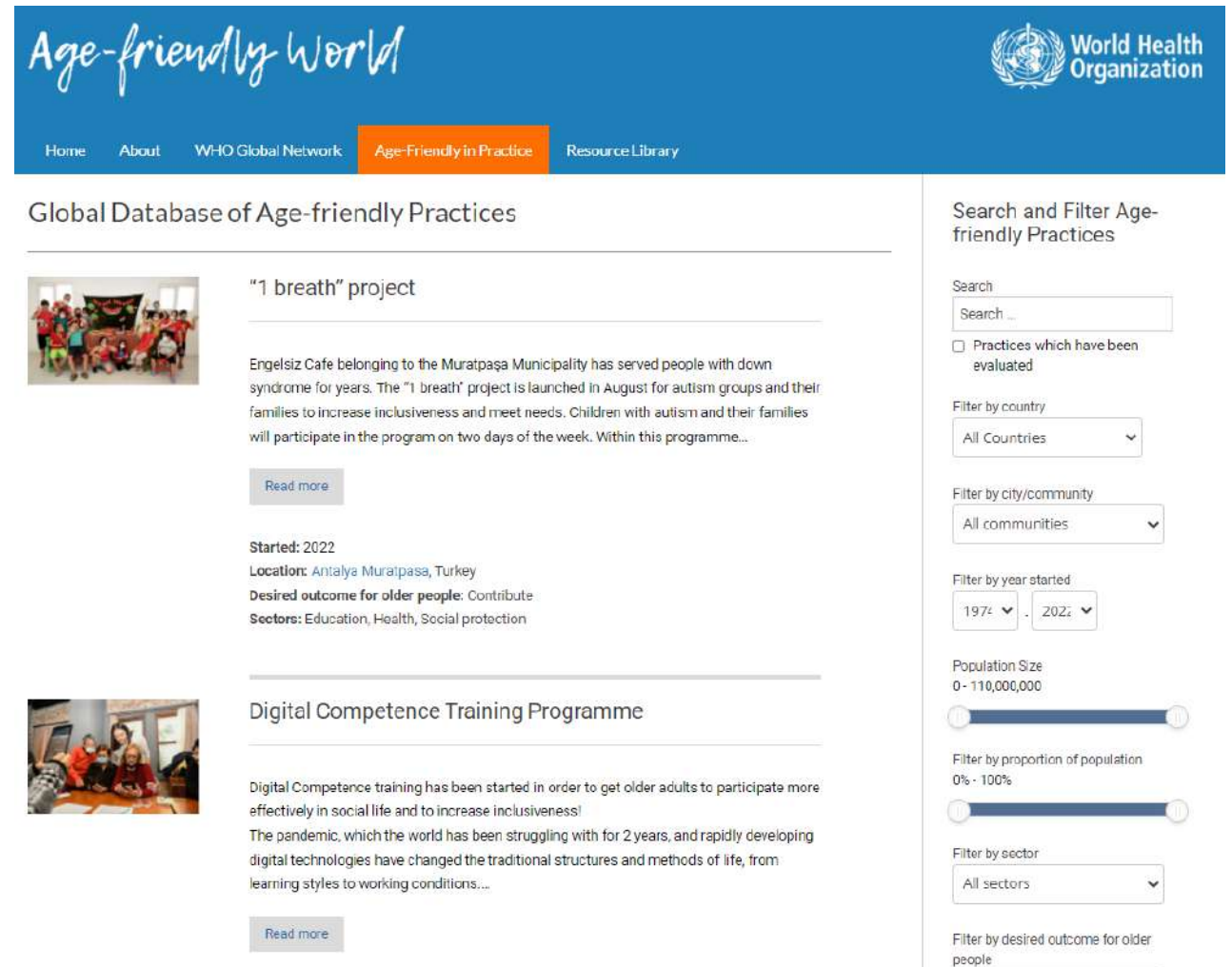
**International:**

- International Federation on Ageing (International)

- Réseau francophone des villes aimes des aînés (International)
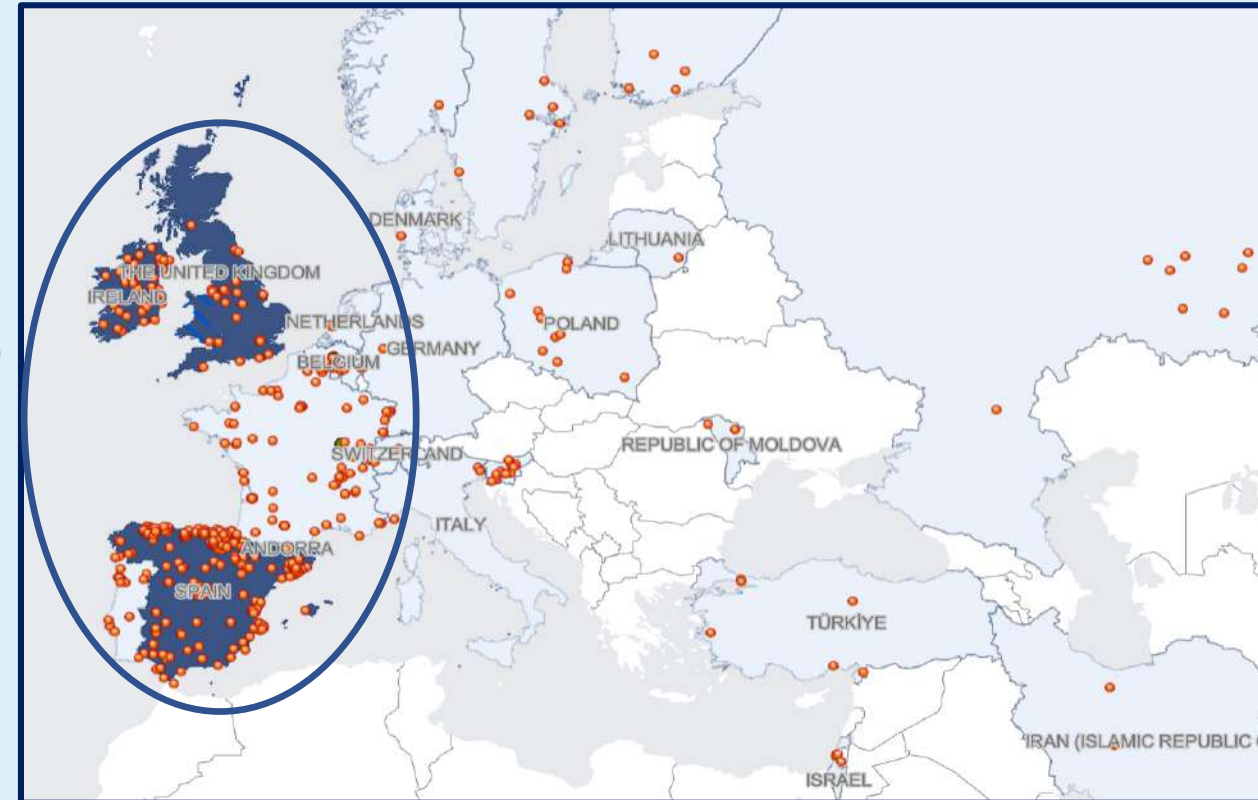
# WHO Global Database of Age-friendly Practices



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Over **600 age-friendly practices**
covering a wide range of topics
(e.g. social isolation, mobility, housing),
**geographical areas** (e.g. cities, rural
and remote communities) and **practice
leaders** (e.g. local authorities, civil
society, academia)



https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/age-friendly-practices/

## WHOLE-OF-CITY APPROACH

Partnerships built within municipalities' age-friendly environment initiatives have been instrumental in organizing the COVID-19 response. Collaborative Newcastle, a partnership involving municipal government, two universities and the health and community sectors, is key to success in combatting COVID-19 and planning a way forward in Newcastle (United Kingdom). The Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership in Belfast (United Kingdom) works closely with Greater Belfast Seniors' Forum to implement a recovery plan for community resilience – "Building back fairer from COVID-19".

## COMMUNICATION

Virtual: cities and communities adapted to lockdowns by switching to virtual communication of messages and online social contact between families and friends.

Trust: cities and communities built trust in the messenger and in messages promoting social distancing and vaccine uptake to increase survival.
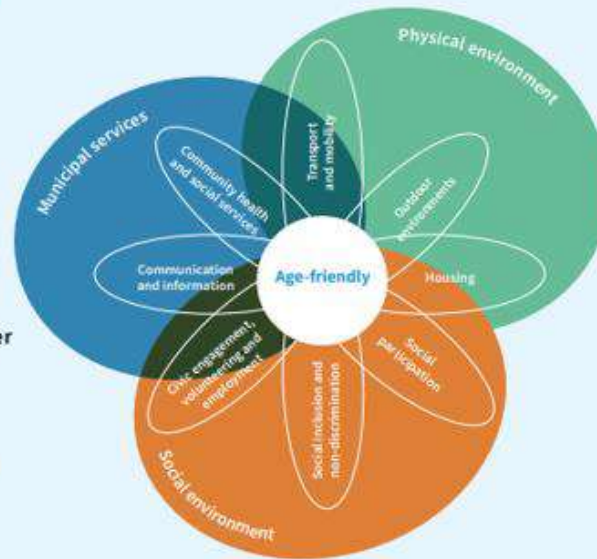
Rijeka (Croatia) demonstrated a high level of preparedness for the pandemic. Pioneering age-friendly communication platforms and training older people helped overcome the digital divide that excludes many older people.

Metamorfosis (Greece) organized online mental and psychological empowerment actions. The "Friendship of all ages" programme combats loneliness among older people through volunteers reaching out via telephone.

## OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT

Neighbourhoods and safe spaces: Udine (Italy) developed 15-minute walkable neighbourhoods in which older people can purchase the essentials of life and sustain social interaction with the help of community volunteers. The municipality adapted parks for age-friendly motion and enhanced them as places of social interaction where people could safely avoid contagion while improving their physical and mental well-being.



## SOCIAL INCLUSION

Outreach: cities reached out to older, vulnerable and ethnic minority populations as priority groups for social support. Brno (Czechia) municipality supported volunteer assistance for older adults. The Department of Social Services operated an all-day hotline helping older citizens to solve any problems connected with the pandemic.

The city of Łódź (Poland) launched a telecare system for lonely elderly people and provided wristbands for monitoring their health and informing about threats related to COVID-19.

Strategy: Barcelona (Spain) built upon the 2008 Neighbourhood Health Strategy to ensure public protection measures promoted equity of outcome for older citizens from poorer neighbourhoods.

## SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Social life: cities adapted platforms and formats to sustain people's participation in social, cultural and leisure activities and enable them to socialize with family, friends and neighbours.

Çankaya (Türkiye) organized online "Forbrain" exercise workshops for older people, supported by studies of daily-life activities, productivity, cognitive competence, support for independent living, lifelong learning and participation in social life.

Several programmes were launched (or continued in a modified form) to support the lives and livelihoods of communities in Győr (Hungary), helping to maintain social contacts. The local Elders' Council communicated online with members during the pandemic.
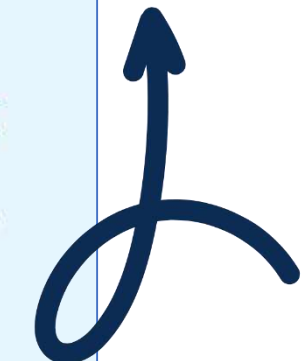
## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Voice: seniors' councils and other civil society organizations influence and disseminate public health messages, build trust and promote solidarity. In Muratpaşa (Türkiye), the Elders' Council ensures that older adults can participate in solving COVID-19 and urban problems, utilizing their experience to create policies and action plans that respond to the priorities of older adults.

Solidarity: the Seniors' Council in Horsens (Denmark) reinforced solidarity between senior citizens, communicating via online cafes and fora and expanding into virtual village councils.

For more information, see:
Age-friendly environments in Europe: indicators, monitoring and assessments[4]

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Co-production with the cities of Rijeka (Croatia), Brno (Czechia), Horsens (Denmark), Metamorfosis (Greece), Győr (Hungary), Udine (Italy), Łódź (Poland), Barcelona (Spain), Çankaya (Türkiye), Muratpaşa (Türkiye), Belfast (United Kingdom) and Newcastle (United Kingdom)

BRNO · Horsens Kommune · GYŐR · Ajuntament de Barcelona · Çankaya · Belfast City Council · Newcastle City Council

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# The Regional Office has stepped up work with Member States in policy areas of high impact



**Vaccination and infectious disease control**

**Long-term Care**

**Mental health and Well-being**

# Global report on ageism



AGEISM refers to HOW WE THINK (STEREOTYPES), FEEL (PREJUDICE) and ACT (DISCRIMINATION) towards others or ourselves based on age

#AWorld4AllAges



AGEISM IS EVERYWHERE

1 IN 2 PEOPLE WORLDWIDE ARE AGEIST AGAINST OLDER PEOPLE and, in Europe, there is more ageism against younger than older people

Ageism affects us THROUGHOUT LIFE and exists in our institutions, our relationships and ourselves

Ageism EXACERBATES OTHER DISADVANTAGE

DISABILITY  AGEISM  RACE  SEX

#AWorld4AllAges



AGEISM IS HARMFUL

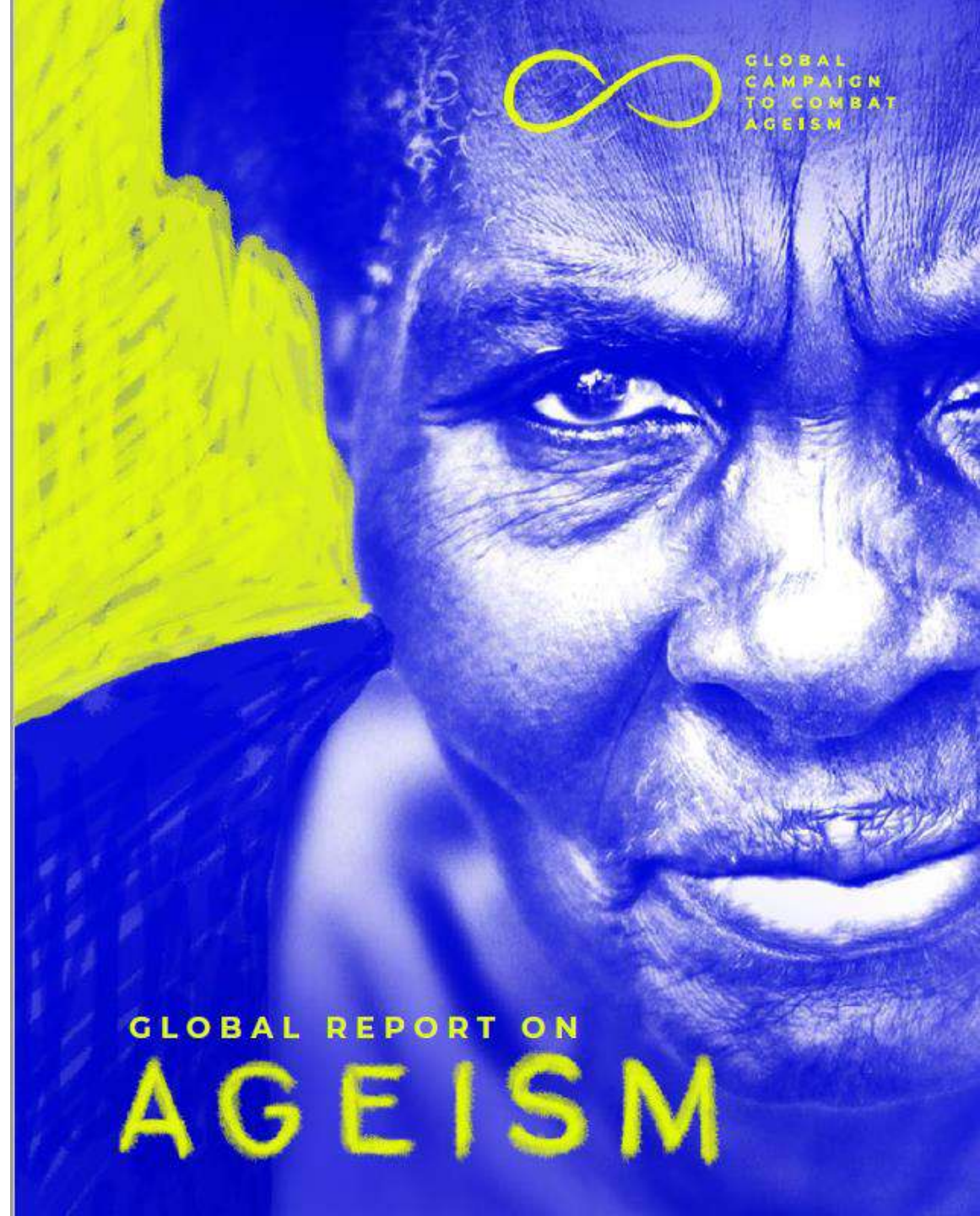Ageism has far-reaching IMPACTS ON ALL ASPECTS OF PEOPLE'S HEALTH

PHYSICAL HEALTH    MENTAL HEALTH    SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Ageism takes a HEAVY ECONOMIC TOLL on individuals and society

#AWorld4AllAges



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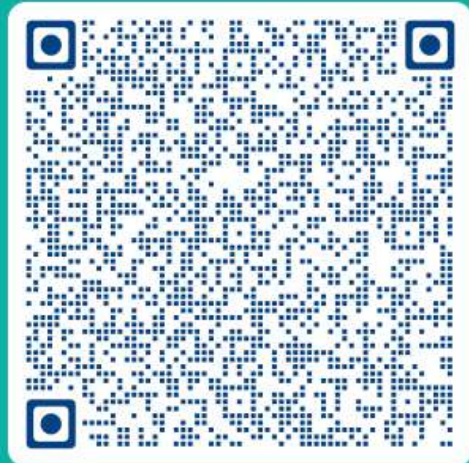


GLOBAL REPORT ON AGEISM

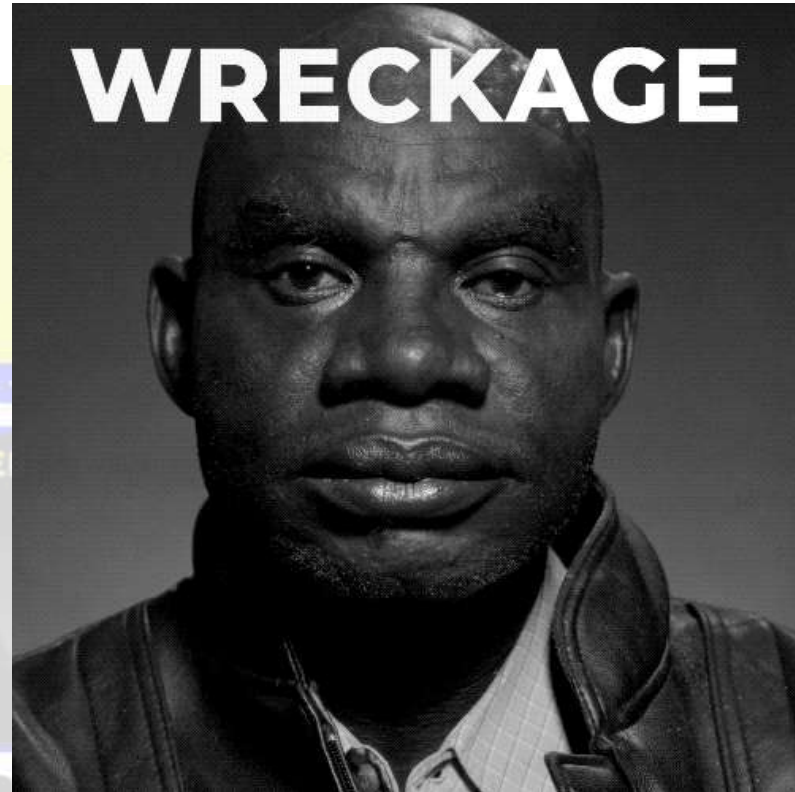## Three recommendations for actions:

- ✓ Invest in the 3 evidence-based strategies to address ageism

- ✓ Improve data and research to gain a better understanding of ageism and how to reduce it

- ✓ Build a movement to change the narrative around age and ageing

# WHO Resources and Toolkits



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WRECKAGE

Abuse of older people takes many forms

**1 in 6** Older people globally experienced abuse in the past year

Sexual abuse

Psychological or emotional abuse

Neglect or abandonment

Financial exploitation

Physical abuse

World Health Organization
European Region

Yon, Y., Mikton, C., Gassoumis, Z., Wilber. K. (2017). Elder abuse prevalence in community settings: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Lancet Global Health, 5(2), E147-156.
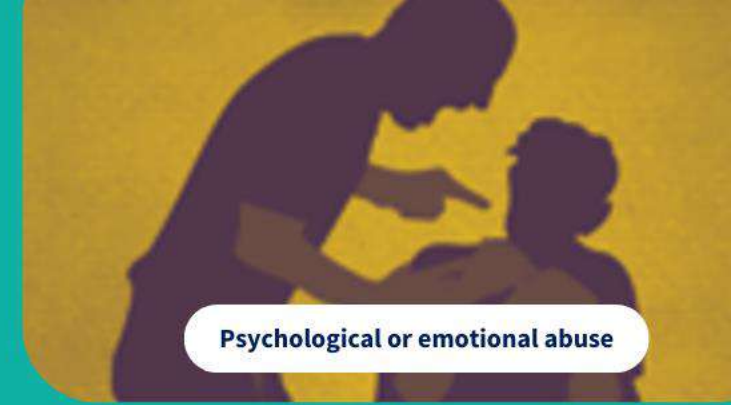
# Abuse in the institutional settings is higher



Elder abuse can happen in institutions.
- Nursing homes
- Long-term care facilities

#ElderAbuse

World Health Organization

Yon, Y., Gonzalez, M. R., Mikton, C., Huber, M., Sethi, D. (2018). The prevalence of elder abuse institutional settings: a systematic review and meta-analysis. European Journal of Public Health, cky093



**3 in 5** staff reported abusing older residents in the past year

# Faces behind Numbers

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# Abuse of older people: a hidden problem

Tackling abuse of older people

Five priorities for the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030)

Decade of healthy ageing

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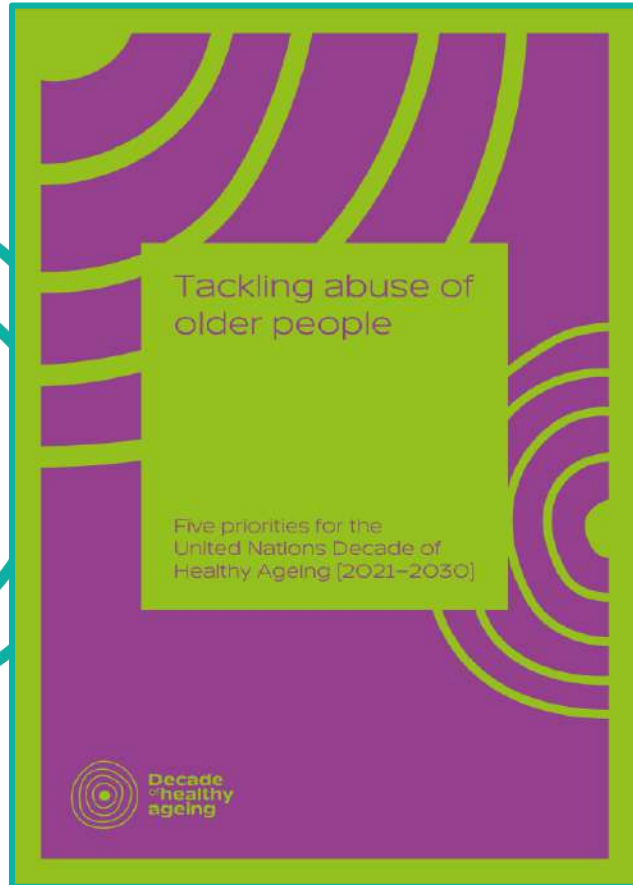
**5** **Priorities to tackle abuse of older people**

1) **Combat Ageism**

2) **Generate more and better data**

3) **Develop and scale up cost-effective**

4) **Make an investment case**

5) **Raise funds**

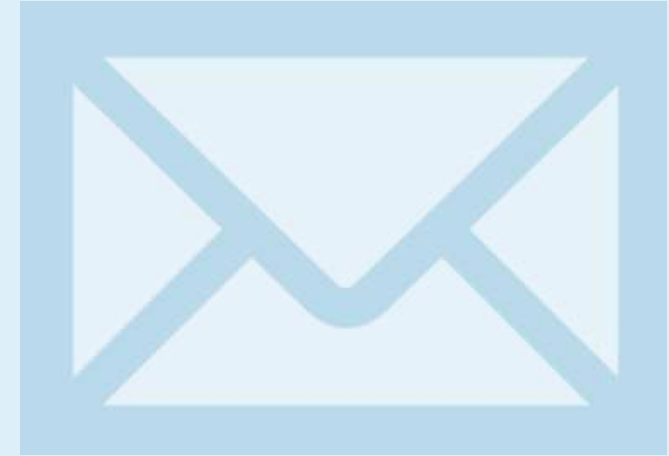# Framework for action on healthy ageing in Europe: Proposed action areas

# WHO Resources on Age-friendly Environments



Age-friendly environments in Europe
**A handbook of domains for policy action**

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Creating age-friendly environments in Europe

**A tool for local policy-makers and planners**

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Age-friendly environments in Europe:
Indicators, monitoring and assessments

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# Thank you!

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World Health Organization
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REGIONALBÜRO FÜR Europa

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BUREAU RÉGIONAL DE L' Europe

Всемирная организация здравоохранения
Европейское региональное бюро

World Health Organization
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