

Statement
by
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Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Austria aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Denmark on behalf of the European Union. I would like to take this opportunity to elaborate on the implementation of the regional commitments of the **Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002** in Austria.

Austria has a long tradition of ageing policies as the first International Plan of Action on Ageing was adopted at the first World Assembly on Ageing in Vienna in 1982. We attach great importance to the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) 2002. The second National Implementation Report was prepared with the participation of all relevant national actors and submitted to the UNECE Secretariat in November 2011. This report informs about the numerous measures Austria has taken in light of the demographic changes in order to implement the ten Commitments of the RIS of the Madrid International Plan at national, regional and local level as well as in the international level, which I would briefly like to present.

Within the framework of the **Austrian Federal Act on Senior Citizens, the Federal Senior Citizens' Advisory Committee**, representing the relevant national actors in the field of ageing, has drawn up a comprehensive **Long Term Action Plan for Senior Citizens**. This Plan will soon be adopted by the Austrian Council of Ministers. It contains comprehensive recommendations and measures for improving the quality of life of older persons and covers fourteen fields of action ranging from participation, health, education and long-term care to non-discrimination, ageing migrants and infrastructure. In addition to the Federal Long Term Plan, Austria has taken various measures in order to cope with the challenges of an ageing society, which include:

- the recognition of **active ageing** as central concept and operational approach for national and regional policies on ageing, including **preventive healthcare at the workplace** and **reforms of the pension system** to allow as many people as possible to remain longer in the labour market and to prevent early retirement;
- the **National Plan on Lifelong Learning** to empower older persons through education programmes as a basis for self-determined lives;
- a **Long-Term Care Fund Act** for social services for people in need of long-term care and assistance and for persons with disabilities;
- a set of **measures to prevent and cope with the abuse and neglect of older persons**;
- **and mainstreaming ageing**, awareness-raising and combating negative stereotypes of older persons.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As pointed out by the distinguished representative of Denmark, the European Union has dedicated 2012 to the **European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations**. Austria fully supports this initiative which aims at promoting action to develop policies and specific measures to help combat age discrimination and overcome age-related stereotypes. The Austrian initiatives during the European Year focus on the labour market, social inclusion, ageing in dignity as well as solidarity between generations. The official opening conference of the European Year will take place in Graz on 29 February 2012. Various national initiatives such as an expert conference on „healthy cities“, the launch of an international event-platform „work and age“ and regional events on rights and duties of young and older persons will follow. Additionally, in order to raise awareness about the objectives of the European Year, more than 25 well-known Austrians have been appointed as Austrian Ambassadors for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

Let me also take this opportunity to inform you about one of the highlights of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. As the chair of the UNECE Working Group on Ageing, which was established at the UNECE-headquarters in Geneva in 2008 as one of the results of the first cycle of review and appraisal of the MIPAA and the RIS, I am pleased to inform you that Austria will host the **3rd UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing** on the second cycle of review and appraisal of the implementation of MIPAA/RIS **from 18 to 20 September 2012 in Vienna**.

The theme of the Conference will be **“Ensuring a society for all ages: Promoting quality of life and active ageing”**; it will gather ministers, high-level government officials and experts from across the UNECE region to take stock and evaluate the implementation of the MIPAA/RIS since the last Ministerial Conference in León in 2007. Ministerial and expert panels will deal with a broad range of topics including the promotion of longer working life, the non-discrimination and social inclusion of older persons, the creation of an enabling environment for health, independence and ageing in dignity as well as solidarity between generations. The discussions will also include representatives from civil society and the scientific community. The Conference will end with the adoption of the **Vienna Ministerial Declaration 2012** on the priorities of activities for the next five years until 2017. Both the **Research and the Civil Society Forum** will adopt a declaration on the day prior to the Conference, which will contribute to the Ministerial discussions. We look forward to the outcome of the Vienna Ministerial Conference feeding into the global review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in 2013.

Thank you very much for your attention!