



Federal Ministry for  
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,  
Women and Youth



International Online Conference

# Strengthening Older People's Rights in Times of Digitalisation

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Lessons learned from Covid-19  
28–29 September 2020

#AgeingEU2020



Konferenz zur Stärkung der Rechte  
älterer Menschen | Conference on  
strengthening older people's rights



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# Introduction

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## Background

Europe is ageing. Birth rates are low and life expectancy – and notably the time span in good health – is rising. The relationship between generations is changing. The role of the family is changing, too. How best to handle demographic change is also a challenge in Europe.

For senior citizens, thanks to digitalisation, it will become easier to continue living up to a very old age autonomously and in the preferred surroundings. Older people wish to make best use of their experiences and abilities up to the very end. It is therefore also important for older persons to secure opportunities for participation, access to information and access to lifelong learning possibilities, particularly in times of digitalisation. Covid-19 has shown impressively the importance of digital participation for leading an autonomous life also in difficult external circumstances.

Generally speaking desire autonomy that is independent of the potential grade of need for assistance. At an international level – e.g. at the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing of the UN (OEWG-A) – calls to improve the status and actually secure older people's rights have been

increasing for a number of years. Future-oriented solutions are required that can work for society as a whole – more than ever with this never-before-seen rate of digitalisation. It carries opportunities, but also risks, especially for the older generation.

What do these developments mean for people in the Member States of the European Union in particular? For the European Union as a whole? Can and should Europe reorganise itself differently and more up to date? Develop a joint strategy? To what extent do recommendations by the OEWGA, the European Council and the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration by the 56 UNECE Member States guide action by the EU Commission and the community of the 27 EU Member States? With a view to the European Pillar of Social Rights, to what extent is Europe also tackling the new challenges now that above all older people face with digitalisation? How does Europe make sure that older people contribute to shaping these processes and are not left behind? What are the lessons learned from countering the Covid-19 pandemic, that has extremely constrained the daily life of older people?

## Objective

In this context, Germany wishes to make use of EU presidency and organize the first high-level European online conference on the topic of “Strengthening Older People’s Rights in Times of Digitalisation – Lessons Learned from Covid-19”.

National and international experts, ideally from all EU Member States, and also participants from the EU Commission, the UN Working Groups UNECE-SWGA and the OEWGA, will actively participate and jointly identify what should in future be initiated, particularly at EU level, in order to also continue improving the living conditions of older people in Europe.

The conference aims to highlight digitalization processes’, which are already underway, specific challenges and opportunities, in particular in times of Covid-19, especially for older people but also all our societies, to examine them thoroughly and identify specific recommendations for action to EU Member States as well as the EU Commission. Furthermore, the results of this conference should also inspire the discussions of the 11th Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA) in New York in 2021, the future work of the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing, and the 2022 Ministerial Conference it will prepare as well as a potential 3rd International Plan of Action on Ageing.



# Conference programme Day 1

**Monday, 28 September 2020 (afternoon)**  
**1.30 p.m. – 4.00 p.m., CEST Berlin/Geneva**

Moderation: Katja Nellissen, Martin Hoffmann

1.00

**Check-in**

1.30 – 1.50

**Welcome**

**Franziska Giffey**  
Federal Minister for Family Affairs,  
Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

**Ebbe Johansen**  
President of AGE Platform Europe

**Franz Müntefering**  
President of BAGSO

1.50 – 2.05

**Opening speech**

**Dubravka Šuica**  
Commission Vice President for Democracy and Demography

2.05 – 2.35

**Discussion**

**Alexis Rinckenbach**  
Vice-Chair of the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing,  
Ministry of Solidarity and Health, France

**Moritz Ader**  
Policy Analyst, Organisation for Economic  
Co-operation and Development (OECD)

**Q&A**

2.35 – 2.45

**Break**

2.45 – 3.40

**Panel One: Autonomy of older people in times of digitalisation**

**John Patrick Clarke**

Vice President of the European Disability Forum

**Robin Allen**

QC, Barrister at Cloisters,  
co-founder of AI Law Consultancy

**Claudia Müller**

Assistant Professor of Business Informatics,  
IT for the Ageing Society, University of Siegen

**Q&A**

3.40 – 3.55

**Presentation of draft Council Conclusions for the EPSCO Council**

**Matthias von Schwanenflügel**

Director-General for Demographic Change, Senior Citizens, Social  
Welfare at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,  
Women and Youth

3.55 – 4.00

**Wrap-up and end of day one**

# Conference programme Day 2

**Tuesday, 29 September (morning)**  
**9.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m., CEST Berlin/Geneva**

Moderation: Katja Nellissen, Martin Hoffmann

9.30 – 9.35

**Welcome**

9.35 – 9.50

**Opening speech**

**Helena Dalli**  
EU Commissioner for Equality

9.50 – 10.20

**Policy reflections**

**Michael O’Flaherty**  
Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights

**Claudia Mahler**  
United Nations Independent Expert on the enjoyment  
of all human rights by older persons

10.20 – 10.45

**Discussion**

**Edmundo Martinho**  
Chair of the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing,  
President of Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa

**Elizabeth Mestheneos**  
50plus Hellas, former President of AGE Platform Europe

**Q&A**

10.45 – 11.00

**Break**

11.00 – 11.50

**Panel Two: Participation of older people**

**Anna Chabiera**

Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, Poland

**Birgitta Sacrédeus**

Committee of the Regions, Dalarna regional council, Sweden

**Andraž Banfi**

Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia

**Q&A**

11.50 – 12.25

**Way forward**

**Heidrun Mollenkopf**

AGE Vice-President and Board Member of BAGSO

**Juliane Seifert**

State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

**Milan Brglez**

Member of the European Parliament

**Giuseppe Palmisano**

President of the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe

12.25 – 12.30

**Closing**



# Speakers

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# Speakers

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**Moritz Ader**

Moritz Ader is a Policy Analyst in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Public Governance Directorate where he is in charge of co-ordinating the portfolio on youth empowerment and intergenerational justice. He has co-ordinated various OECD publications on this topic.



**Robin Allen**

Robin Allen, QC, barrister at Cloisters, works across Europe, specialising in equality and discrimination law, originally as an expert with the EC on the law affecting the most disadvantaged, later working with the EC on the development of the 2000 Equality Directives. He is co-founder of AI Law Consultancy.



**Andraž Banfi**

Andraž Banfi from The Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia is a psychologist with a master's degree in entrepreneurship. He is the head of the national project "Comprehensive Support to Companies for Active Aging of Employees – ASI".



**Milan Brglez**

Milan Brglez is a member of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats group in the European Parliament. He is a member of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) and a substitute member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI).



**Anna Chabiera**

Anna Chabiera works in the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in Poland with a focus on older people and organises research on discrimination. Her responsibilities include monitoring the situation of older people and OEWGA's work at the level of the United Nations.



**John Patrick Clarke**

John Patrick Clarke is Vice President of the European Disability Forum, having retired as Chief Executive Officer of Down Syndrome Ireland, and is a past President of Down Syndrome International. He is immediate past Chair of the Disability Federation of Ireland.

# Speakers

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**Helena Dalli**

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Helena Dalli is the first EU Commissioner for Equality, serving since December 2019. Her role is to deliver on the Union of Equality chapter within the Political Guidelines of President von der Leyen by strengthening Europe's commitment to equality and inclusion in every sense.



**Dr. Franziska Giffey**

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Franziska Giffey has been Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth since March 2018. In addition to a degree in Public Administration, she obtained a Master of Arts degree in European Administrative Management and in 2009 she did her doctorate in the field of political science.



**Ebbe Johansen**

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Ebbe Johansen from Denmark is President of AGE Platform Europe and a board member of Dan-eAge. He has extensive management experience and has worked in several countries. Mr. Johansen has educational experience from the Technical University of Denmark and in human resources.



**Dr. Claudia Mahler**

Claudia Mahler has been working for the German Institute for Human Rights as a senior researcher in the field of economic, social and cultural rights since 2010. Since 2020 she is United Nations Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons.



**Edmundo Martinho**

Edmundo Martinho has a degree in Social Work from the Instituto Superior de Serviço Social de Lisboa and a master's degree in Project Management. In 2017, he was appointed President of Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa. He is Chair of the UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing.



**Dr. Elizabeth Mestheneos**

Elizabeth Mestheneos has worked as an independent researcher in Greece since 1988 particularly on age-related research projects. She is a founding member of the NGO “50plus Hellas” for active and healthy ageing in Greece. In 2008, she was elected President of AGE Platform Europe and served in this role until 2011.

# Speakers

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**Dr. Heidrun Mollenkopf**

Heidrun Mollenkopf is a social scientist and gerontologist and a board member of BAGSO. Her research activities include the use of technology to maintain quality of life in old age. She represents BAGSO, among others, at AGE Platform Europe, where she serves as Vice-President.



**Prof. Dr. Claudia Müller**

Claudia Müller is Assistant Professor of Business Informatics, specialising in “IT for the Ageing Society” at the University of Siegen, Germany. Her expertise is participatory design with and for older adults, vulnerable user groups and local communities. She is representative chairperson of the commission of the Eighth Federal Government Report on Older People.



**Franz Müntefering**

Since 2015, Franz Müntefering has been President of the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO). He served as a member of the Bundestag for more than 32 years, served as minister in North Rhine-Westphalia and at federal level. Since leaving the Bundestag in 2013, he has been socially committed in many ways.



**Michael O'Flaherty**

Michael O'Flaherty is Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. Previously, he was Established Professor of Human Rights Law and Director of the Irish Centre for Human Rights at the National University of Ireland Galway, and served as Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.



**Giuseppe Palmisano**

Giuseppe Palmisano (full professor of International Law) is President of the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe. He is currently Professor of International Law and International Human Rights Law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Roma Tre.



**Alexis Rinckenbach**

Alexis Rinckenbach is Vice-Chair of the Standing Working Group on Ageing of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and is a French representative to the UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA). He is Head of the European and International Affairs Unit of the Directorate-General for Social Cohesion at the Ministry for Solidarity and Health, France.

# Speakers

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**Birgitta Sacrédeus**

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Birgitta Sacrédeus is a Member of Dalarna Regional Council, Sweden, and Member of the European Committee of the Regions – the EU’s assembly of regionally and locally elected representatives across the European Union, which advises on new laws that have an impact on regions and cities.



**Juliane Seifert**

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Juliane Seifert has been State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth since March 2018. Prior to this, she held the position of Executive Secretary of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). Before this role, she was head of the division “political planning and social analyses” at the State Chancellery of Rhineland-Palatinate.



**Dubravka Šuica**

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Since December 2019, Dubravka Šuica has been Vice-President of the European Commission for Democracy and Demography. She is a Croatian politician from the city of Dubrovnik, where she served as the first female mayor. From 2013 to 2019, she was a Member of the European Parliament.



**Prof. Dr. Matthias von Schwanenflügel**

Matthias von Schwanenflügel has served as Director-General for “Demographic Change, Senior Citizens, Social Welfare” at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth since May 2014. He is a doctor of law and since 2017 has lectured as an honorary professor at the University of Bremen.



# List of documents

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- Ageing Europe – 2019 edition  
Ageing Europe – looking at the lives of older people in the EU’ provides a broad range of statistics that describe the everyday lives of the European Union’s (EU) older generations.  
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/de/web/products-statistical-books/-/KS-02-19-681>
- Pension adequacy report 2018 – Current and future income adequacy in old age in the EU (Volume 1)  
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8084&furtherPubs=yes>
- Risk Assessments of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control  
<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en>
- EU ‘Study on Risks and Opportunities of digitalisation for financial inclusion’:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/fsug-study-181001-digitalisation-financial-inclusion\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/fsug-study-181001-digitalisation-financial-inclusion_en)
- Coronavirus pandemic in the EU - Fundamental Rights Implications - Bulletin 3, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, June 2020  
<https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2020/covid19-rights-impact-june-1>
- FRA Fundamental Rights Report 2018 – rights of older people  
<https://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2018/fundamental-rights-older-people-need-be-better-protected>
- The focus chapter of the 2018 Fundamental Rights Report Shifting perceptions: towards a rights based approach to ageing  
[https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2018-fundamental-rights-report-2018-focus\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-fundamental-rights-report-2018-focus_en.pdf)
- FRA’s bulletins Coronavirus pandemic in the EU - Fundamental rights implications <https://fra.europa.eu/en/themes/covid-19>, in particular Bulletin 3 Coronavirus pandemic in the EU - Fundamental Rights Implications: with a focus on older people  
[https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2020-coronavirus-pandemic-eu-bulletin-june\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-coronavirus-pandemic-eu-bulletin-june_en.pdf)
- United Nations General Secretary Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on older persons, United Nations, May 2020.  
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/news/2020/05/covid-19-older-persons/>

- UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs – Ageing  
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/>
- Open ended working group on ageing (OEWGA)  
<https://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/>
- UNECE Standing Working Group on Ageing, including UNECE Policy Briefs  
<https://www.unece.org/population/wga.html>
- Report of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, Robots and rights: the impact of automation on the human rights of older persons. United Nations (2017),  
[https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/36/48](https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/36/48)
- Report of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Claudia Mahler, Impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, United Nations (2020), <https://undocs.org/A/75/205>
- International Expert-Conference on Human Rights of older Persons ICHRoP 2018: Conference Declaration. Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection, Vienna, 2018  
(<http://www.ageing.at/document/conference-declaration>)
- AGE Policy Paper « COVID-19 and Human Rights Concerns for Older Persons” (ENG/DE/FR/CATALAN); Older persons have the same rights as others, and these must be equally protected during the pandemic  
<https://age-platform.eu/publications/covid-19-and-human-rights-concerns-older-persons>
- AGE Policy Paper “Recovery from the COVID-19 crisis: Do not repeat the errors of the 2008 Great Depression”; Social justice, cohesion and solidarity between generations are at the heart of the European project and these principles mustn’t be put under pressure in the looming economic crisis:  
<https://age-platform.eu/publications/recovery-covid-19-crisis-do-not-repeat-errors-2008-great-depression-age-working-paper>

# List of documents

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- Digitalisation of financial services increases risk of exclusion & abuse in old age – interview with AGE Platform Europe: <https://www.age-platform.eu/policy-work/news/digitalisation-financial-services-increases-risk-exclusion-abuse-old-age-age>
- EU Commissioner for Equality statement on older persons' rights in time of COVID-19: [https://www.age-platform.eu/sites/default/files/Covid-19\\_%26\\_olderPeople-Dalli\\_statement-Apr20.pdf](https://www.age-platform.eu/sites/default/files/Covid-19_%26_olderPeople-Dalli_statement-Apr20.pdf)
- The Eighth Federal Government Report on Older People “Older People and Digitisation”
  - a. DEUTSCH: <https://www.achter-altersbericht.de/bericht>
  - b. ENGLISH: <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/meta/en/publications-en/older-people-and-digitisation-/159710>
- BAGSO-Statement regarding the Eighth Federal Government Report on Older People
  - a. DEUTSCH: <https://www.bagso.de/publikationen/stellungnahme/aeltere-menschen-und-digitalisierung/>
  - b. ENGLISH: <https://www.bagso.de/publikationen/stellungnahme/older-people-and-digitalisation/>
- BAGSO-Positions paper „Older persons in a digital world“
  - a. DEUTSCH: <https://www.bagso.de/publikationen/positionspapier/aeltere-menschen-in-der-digitalen-welt/>
  - b. ENGLISH: <https://www.bagso.de/publikationen/positionspapier/older-persons-in-a-digital-world/>
- BAGSO Publication: A society for all ages, The United Nations Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Significance for Policy on Ageing, BAGSO, November 2019
  - a. DEUTSCH: <https://www.bagso.de/publikationen/themenheft/eine-gesellschaft-fuer-alte-lebensalter/>
  - b. ENGLISH: <https://www.bagso.de/publikationen/themenheft/a-society-for-all-ages/>
- Roadmap on Combating Social Exclusion in Later Life addressed to policy makers at all levels – ROSEnet: [http://rosenetcost.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/cost\\_rosenet\\_actionpolicy6\\_web.pdf](http://rosenetcost.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/cost_rosenet_actionpolicy6_web.pdf)





# Organisers

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# BMFSFJ

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Federal Ministry for  
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,  
Women and Youth

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) has been headed by Federal Minister Dr. Franziska Giffey since March 2018.

The Ministry is currently staffed by around 900 employees. These are distributed across six departments (Administration; Democracy and Civic Engagement; Family Affairs; Demographic Change, Older Persons, Welfare Organisations; Gender Equality; Children and Youth), the Minister's Office, the Federal Antidiscrimination Office and the Independent Commissioner for Child Sex Abuse Issues, making for a total of 70 divisions.

Women make up some 72 percent of ministry staff and 59 percent of departmental management positions are held by women.

Germany holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union at a time marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the period between

1 July and 31 December, the ministers of the Federal Government chair numerous Council Meetings at EU level. The Federal Ministry for Senior Citizens has set itself several priorities for this period, one of them being strengthening older persons autonomy and participation.

People in Europe are getting older and at the same time are in good health. This is a stroke of luck for whole generations. During the COVID-19 crisis, older people across Europe have been severely restricted in their everyday lives. Social distancing has been particularly challenging for people living on their own or in nursing homes. The Federal Ministry for Senior Citizens aims to strengthen the rights of older people and their equal participation in an increasingly digitalised society and to promote their best interests. This will strengthen cohesion across generations and countries.

# BAGSO

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BAGSO, the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations, represents the interests of older generations in Germany. It stands up for active, self-determined and healthy ageing in social security. In a colourful and diverse society BAGSO promotes a differentiated image of old age. This includes both, the various opportunities arising of longer lives as well as times of vulnerability and need of care.

BAGSO is an umbrella organisation of about 120 civil society organisations that are run by or work for older people. As such it calls on politics, society and economy to offer conditions that

allow for a good and dignified life in older age. In important policy areas, BAGSO puts themes that are relevant for healthy and active ageing on the political agenda. In policy briefs and position papers, BAGSO identifies requirements for good quality of life in older age and provides recommendations for political actions at federal, state and municipal level. [www.bagso.de/english](http://www.bagso.de/english)

# AGE

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AGE Platform Europe (AGE) is a European network of non-profit organisations of and for people aged 50+, which aims to voice and promote the interests of the 200 million citizens aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness on the issues that concern them most.

AGE seeks to give a voice to older and retired people in the EU policy debates, through the active participation of their representative organisations at EU, national, regional and local levels, and provides a European platform for the exchange of experience and best practices.

AGE's work focuses on a wide range of policy areas that impact on older and retired people. These include issues of anti-discrimination, employment of older workers and active ageing, social protection, pension reforms, social inclusion, health, elder abuse, intergenerational solidarity, research, accessibility of public transport and of the build environment, and new technologies (ICT).



# Technical instructions

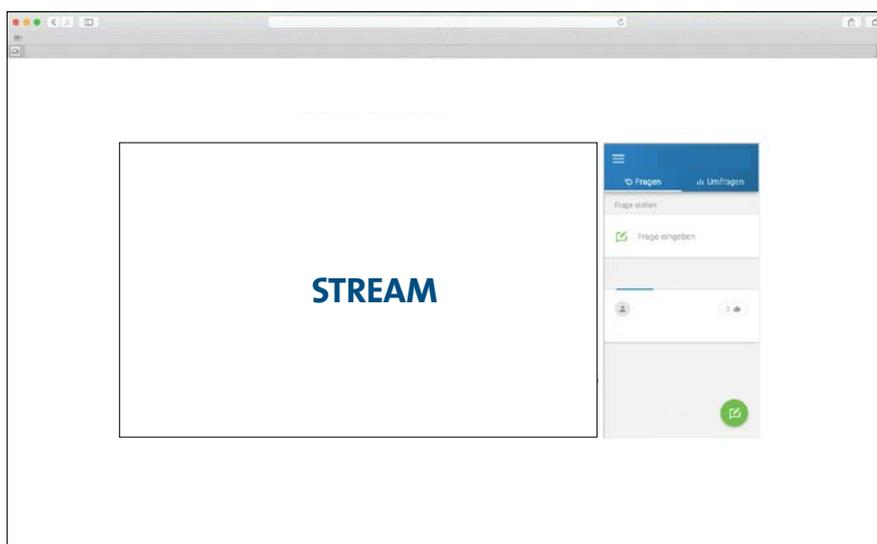
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# Technical instructions

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The event will be held digitally. You can participate via your desktop computer, a tablet or a mobile phone. To attend, please complete the following steps:

- We will send you a link to join the online stream of the event and a password to participate.
- Enter the password on the page and connect directly to the stream.
- There is a total of four streams available for you to choose from: German, English, French and the original language. Select the stream of your choice from the event's main page.



Next to the stream, you have the opportunity to ask questions and participate in surveys/votes. On the right-hand side of your screen there is a menu with two tabs, one for questions and one for surveys. Both can be accessed directly. You can ask questions anytime, surveys/votes will be announced by the moderator.

If you want to discuss the event in social media, please use the hashtag #AgeingEU2020



