The European Parliament,

– having regard to Articles 6, 153, 156 and 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

– having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the “Charter”), in particular Articles 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35 thereof,

– having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,

– having regard to the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union stating that the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of age is a general principle of EU law as a special case of equal treatment¹,

– having regard to the Council conclusions of 7 June 2010 on active ageing,

– having regard to the Council conclusions of 9 September 2020 on the human rights, participation and well-being of older persons in the era of digitalisation,

– having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals,

– having regard to the Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing of 8-12 April 2002,

– having regard to the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the fourth UN Economic Commission for Europe Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Lisbon on 22 September 2017 entitled ‘A Sustainable Society for all Ages: Realizing the potential of living longer’,

having regard to the report of the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons on the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on the enjoyment of all human rights of older persons, submitted for the 75th session of the UN General Assembly on 21 July 2020,

having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights,


having regard to the Council recommendation of 19 December 2016 entitled ‘Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults’,

having regard to the Council recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning,

having regard to its resolutions of 7 September 2010 on the role of women in an ageing society and 15 November 2018 on care services in the EU for improved gender equality,

having regard its resolution of 11 November 2010 on the demographic challenge and solidarity between generations,

having regard to its resolution of 26 May 2016 on poverty: a gender perspective,

having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2016 on creating labour market conditions favourable for work-life balance,

having regard to its resolution of 14 June 2017 on the need for an EU strategy to end and prevent the gender pension gap,

having regard to its resolution of 14 November 2017 on the deployment of cohesion policy instruments by regions to address demographic change,

having regard to its position adopted at first reading on 28 March 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing ‘Erasmus+’:

1. OJ L 246, 23.9.2011, p. 5.
the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013¹,

– having regard to Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation² and establishing the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation as regards employment and occupation,

– having regard to the Commission proposal for a Council directive of 2 July 2008 on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (COM(2008)0426), and to Parliament’s position of 2 April 2009 thereon³,

– having regard to the Commission communication of 12 October 2006 entitled ‘The demographic future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity’ (COM(2006)0571),

– having regard to the Commission report of 15 December 2006 entitled ‘European Economy – the impact of ageing on public expenditure: projections for the EU-25 Member States on pensions, healthcare, long-term care, education and unemployment transfers (2004-2050)’,


– having regard to the Commission communication of 26 April 2017 entitled ‘An initiative to support work-life balance for working parents and carers’ (COM(2017)0252),


– having regard to the Commission report of 17 June 2020 on the impact of demographic change (COM(2020)0241),

– having regard to the report of the World Health Organization (WHO) of 1 April 2002 entitled ‘Active Ageing: A Policy Framework’,

– having regard to the WHO world report of 30 September 2015 on ageing and health,
– having regard to the WHO’s global strategy and action plan on ageing and health for 2016-2020 and UN’s decision to proclaim 2021-2030 as the Decade of Healthy Ageing,
– having regard to the UN Principles for Older Persons adopted by General Assembly resolution 46/91 of 16 December 1991,
– having regard to the Global AgeWatch Index 2015,
– having regard to the UN report of 2019 on world population ageing,
– having regard to the position of active ageing as one of the key elements of the Europe 2020 strategy,
– having regard to the European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience,
– having regard to the 2010 UK Equality Act, which makes it illegal to discriminate against people based on gender reassignment, sexual orientation and sex,
– having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
– having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development,
– having regard to the position in the form of amendments of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality,
– having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A9-0194/2021),

General remarks

A. whereas Europe’s ageing population is a demographic phenomenon which involves a decrease both in fertility and mortality rates and a higher life expectancy;

B. whereas the population of the EU is decreasing; whereas in 1960, EU residents made up 13.5% of the global population, while in 2018 they accounted for 6.9% and by 2070 are expected to account for around 4%; whereas this situation is related to, among other factors, a fall in birth rates in the EU vis-à-vis other regions in the world, which leads to population ageing with an effect on the age composition and relative shares of different age groups and contributes to the inversion of the demographic pyramid; whereas the demographic transition is a universal phenomenon and the EU’s decreasing

1 OJ L 188, 12.7.2019, p. 79.
2 COM(2020)0241.
share of the world’s population reflects an earlier start in this global process; whereas the active participation of older people in society should not be underestimated; whereas more than 20 % of those aged between 65 and 74 and around 15 % of those aged 75 or over participate in formal and/or informal voluntary activities;

C. whereas the current demographic situation has a severe impact on the social, economic and territorial cohesion of the EU; whereas it is important for the EU to mainstream demographic aspects into all of its policies; whereas the working-age population (people aged between 15 and 64) is expected to decrease significantly from 333 million in 2016 to 292 million in 2070; whereas by 2100, people aged 80 and over are projected to account for 14.6 % of the population;

D. whereas gender equality is a basic value of the EU recognised in the Treaties and in the Charter, and whereas the EU is committed to integrating it into all of its activities;

E. whereas longevity is a remarkable collective achievement underpinned by significant progress in economic and social development and in health, which has considerably improved quality of life and contributed to a 10-year increase in the average life expectancy of men and women over the last 50 years; whereas life expectancy is expected to rise from 78.3 to 86.1 years for men and 83.7 to 90.3 years for women between 2016 and 2070; whereas the increase in average life expectancy must be viewed, in all circumstances, as a factor in the advancement of civilisation and never as a constraint; whereas data shows that in 2018, the estimated number of healthy life years was 64.2 for women and 63.7 for men; whereas, however, the discrepancy between life expectancy and healthy life years is worrisome and should be urgently addressed;

F. whereas a longer, healthier life is valuable for both individuals and societies, creating new opportunities for the participation and inclusion of older people in economic and social life; whereas social engagement at an older age contributes, in turn, to individual health and well-being; whereas there is a correlation between longevity and social status; whereas participation in a range of social activities such as volunteering, sport and hobbies, as well as regular contact with family and friends, tend to have a positive impact on the overall health of older people and prevent their isolation;

G. whereas the natural change in the EU population has been negative since 2012, with more deaths (4.7 million) than births (4.2 million) recorded in 2019; whereas the fertility rate in the EU is falling and dropped to 1.55 in 2018; whereas this is linked to a variety of factors, including better health and increased levels of education, but also the general socio-economic situation, including uncertainty and income devaluation, which affects all groups but above all young people, in particular their quality of life, work-life

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balance and life planning; whereas demographic change could have an impact on the EU’s economic and social sustainability in the medium and long term; whereas access to quality public services is a decisive factor in quality of life; whereas the economic and social impact of demographic change underlines the need to strengthen social security and healthcare systems;

H. whereas there is research that points to the correlation between fertility rates and policies that encourage better job opportunities, decent working and living conditions, flexible working arrangements, decent family support, financial support during maternity, paternity and parental leave, quality childcare from the early years on, and a more equal distribution of care responsibilities between men and women;

I. whereas the rates of part-time employment are higher for women (31,3 %) than for men (8,7 %) and also affect older women (49,8 % of older men compared to 64,1 % of older women); whereas in 2018, the number of usual working hours in the EU-28 averaged 30,3 hours per week for men aged between 65 and 74 and 24,1 hours per week for women of the same age, and whereas men are expected to be part of the labour force for 38,6 years, while the corresponding figure for women is 33,7 years;

J. whereas closing the gender employment gap is conditional on the fulfilment of basic social rights and the provision of basic social services;

K. whereas women aged between 55 and 64 have a lower employment rate than men (52,4 % for women compared to 65,4 % for men), and are the most likely providers of informal care services in the home;

L. whereas the total number of people of working age (15-64) will fall by 20,8 million in the EU between 2005 and 2030 as the baby boomer generation retires, resulting in a greater burden on the Member States’ healthcare and pension systems; whereas the total age-dependency ratio is expected to reach 57 % by 2100, almost double that of 2019 (31 %);

M. whereas the median age in the EU-28 rose from 38,3 years in 2001 to 43,1 years in 2018; whereas in 2018, 19 % of EU citizens were 65 or older and whereas their needs should be taken into account in the political decision-making process at EU, national and regional levels;

N. whereas life is accompanied by changes such as the loss of a partner, relatives or friends, the degradation of one’s health and changes in one’s habits, work patterns and financial situation; whereas older people are particularly exposed to the phenomena of social exclusion and isolation; whereas an increasing number of adults in the EU are experiencing social isolation (75 million people – 18 % of the population); whereas the risk of social isolation is highest among older people, while the feeling of loneliness is most significant in the 26-45 age bracket;

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1 Eurostat, *Ageing Europe: Looking at the lives of older people in the EU, 2019.*
2 Eurostat, *Ageing Europe: Looking at the lives of older people in the EU, 2019.*
O. whereas more than 50 % of carers under the age of 65 combine care with employment; whereas, as is often pointed out by the Commission, care responsibilities are one of the main reasons for women’s lower levels of labour market participation, either because they reduce their working hours or leave paid work altogether, amounting to a loss for Europe of EUR 370 billion per year; whereas estimates show that 80 % of all care across the EU is provided by informal carers, who are mostly women (75 %), indicating the existence of a gender care gap strongly influencing the gender pension gap; whereas care provided by informal carers without any formal employment contract is particularly problematic, as it leaves them outside of the labour market and without any possibility of regularisation; whereas this type of situation leads to a double negative effect, whereby, on the one hand, these informal carers (mostly women) are low paid as a rule, lack social protection, do not pay social security contributions and as a result either do not receive any pensions at the end of their working lives, or only receive the minimum pension, and, on the other hand, this type of situation has a negative impact on the state and its relevant institutions, which are deprived of social security contributions and taxes paid by employers and employees;

P. whereas persons with disabilities or people belonging to ethnic, racial, linguistic, sexual or other minorities of all ages have concealed or are concealing part of their identity out of fear or the threat of rejection or abuse; whereas older persons with disabilities or of different racial, ethnic or social origins, genetic features, language or sexual orientation face more discrimination, stigma and non-consensual procedures and are at greater risk of social exclusion;

Q. whereas COVID-19 also has a major impact on demography; whereas many older people have died and, as some studies suggest, the coronavirus has had a considerable impact on EU population trends, such as a reduction in life expectancy and family planning;

R. whereas the impact of gender differences in health and health inequalities related to socio-cultural factors should be duly taken into account while elaborating our ageing policies; whereas certain diseases and conditions associated with age have a differentiated impact on women and men, such as depression or cardiovascular diseases; whereas certain diseases and conditions affect more women than men, such as Alzheimer’s or dementia, breast cancer, incontinence, osteoporosis and osteoarthritis; whereas the prevalence of such conditions will increase in our ageing societies;

S. whereas demographic change does not have a uniform impact on all countries and regions, but has a bigger impact on regions that are already lagging behind, aggravating existing territorial and social inequalities; whereas rural, peripheral and outermost regions, including islands, are most affected by depopulation, with mainly young people and women leaving those areas, resulting in an increasing share of older people living there, which could increase the risk of social isolation; whereas the rural population in some regions is less likely to be at risk of poverty and social exclusion than the urban population

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T. whereas the number of older people (80 and older) in the EU will increase by 57.1% between 2010 and 2030\(^1\), with significant consequences for social security systems;

U. whereas the COVID-19 lockdown measures and the economic recession have had a disproportionate effect on women because of the unequal sharing of care responsibilities, sectoral specialisation and increased domestic violence;

V. whereas between 2000 and 2015, the population of those aged 60 and over in the EU grew by 68% in cities and 25% in rural areas;

W. whereas according to the European Spatial Planning Observation Network, the population in European agglomerations will increase by 24.1 million by 2050, accounting for almost half of the total EU population, while the rural population will decrease by 7.9 million people;

X. whereas older women are generally more likely than older men to face severe difficulties in accessing basic goods and services, such as health services, long-term care and decent housing, owing to a range of factors such as the gender pay gap and the pension gap, women’s greater longevity or the greater proportion of older women living alone\(^2\);

Y. whereas older people are more likely to experience limited access to the internet as well as lacking awareness and knowledge about existing and emerging technologies; whereas only 35% of people aged 55-74 possess basic digital skills, compared to 82% of those aged 16-24\(^3\) and, as a consequence, older people are more vulnerable to exclusion, including digital exclusion; whereas both the social and digital exclusion of older people has been exacerbated by the lockdown and social measures taken by the Member States in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; whereas barrier-free and user-friendly technologies can help to overcome these challenges; whereas the Council addressed this problem in 2020 and issued conclusions on the human rights, participation and well-being of older persons in the era of digitalisation;

Z. whereas the population fell by up to 15% in some regions of the EU between 1998 and 2018 owing to rapid depopulation and population ageing; whereas rapid demographic change generates disproportionally high adjustment costs; whereas almost two thirds of regions that experience a rapidly shrinking population have a low GDP per capita\(^4\); whereas population ageing is causing a shrinking working-age population and may result in the decline of municipalities and villages throughout the EU; whereas decisions to merge municipalities and villages or to incorporate them into other municipalities or cities may also result in municipalities and villages disappearing altogether;

AA. whereas all policies addressing demographic opportunities and challenges must take an inclusive, rights- and evidence-based, people-centred approach, and must uphold the principles of equality – particularly gender equality – and non-discrimination, and safeguard women’s rights, including their sexual and reproductive and economic rights; whereas tackling demographic challenges must by no means undermine individual

\(^1\) Eurostat baseline scenario.


\(^3\) European Commission, The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2020, p. 52.

\(^4\) SWD(2020)0109, p. 42.
reproductive autonomy; whereas access to sexual and reproductive health services and commodities is essential for physical, mental and social well-being;

**AB.** whereas in some Member States there are tendencies to instrumentalise demographic change in order to undermine sexual and reproductive health and rights, thus contributing to the erosion of personal freedoms; whereas all policies addressing demographic change must be rights-based, people-centred, tailor-made and evidence-based, and must uphold sexual and reproductive rights;

**AC.** whereas EU policies and action on ageing and demographic change must be fully in line with the EU Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025; whereas there is a close correlation between demographic challenges and gender mainstreaming, which should be reflected in the relevant policy responses;

**AD.** whereas time use statistics show an uneven share of care work by gender all around Europe; whereas in spite of significant national differences linked to the extension of welfare and social services and different female activity rates, women bear a disproportionate proportion of the care burden with profound implications for their labour market performance and their fertility choices;

**AE.** whereas particular attention should be paid to the very old in order, where necessary, to help people who have lost their independence and prevent them from becoming isolated;

**AF.** whereas the proportion of pensioners aged 65 and over at risk of poverty in the EU has gradually increased since 2013;

**AG.** whereas older people contribute to society and have continued to do so during the COVID-19 pandemic, including as employees, caregivers or volunteers; whereas, for instance, many older medical professionals have come out of retirement to support efforts to contain the pandemic; whereas informal carers, most of whom are women, have stepped up their efforts to compensate for reduced education, child and long-term care services during the pandemic;

**AH.** whereas an ageing population can act as a source of knowledge about local traditions, food and ways of life in rural areas, which, in turn, can be used to develop local tourism and business;

**AI.** whereas the upcoming long-term vision for rural areas will outline the EU’s strategy for tackling the impact of demographic change on our socio-economic fabric;

**AJ.** whereas generational renewal is one of the post-2020 specific objectives of the common agricultural policy (CAP); whereas knowledge transfer and intergenerational learning are crucial to increasing cooperation and solidarity between generations, thus bridging the generation gap;

**Health and care**

**AK.** whereas due account should always be taken of the ethical risks arising from the use of technology in health;
AL. whereas the WHO defines healthy ageing as the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age; whereas there is a correlation between perceived health and income; whereas in 2017 less than one third (32.4%) of older people in the first income quintile (20% of the population with the lowest incomes) perceived their health as good or very good, compared to 54.7% of older people belonging to the 20% of the population with the highest incomes; whereas the results of the European Health Interview Survey show that the majority of older people were found to have chronic illnesses or complaints, and only one in nine declared the absence of such problems, and whereas many disabilities emerge or become more pronounced at an older age; whereas almost half of older people in the EU (aged 65 and over) have reported difficulties with at least one personal activity or domestic activity; whereas about a quarter of the EU population experienced long-standing limitations due to health problems in 2018; whereas approximately 15% of adults aged 60 and over have a mental disorder;

AM. whereas in most developed countries, older people are considered to be those aged 65 and over; whereas the 65+ age group is very heterogeneous, with significant differences in health, lifestyle, status, and living and social conditions; whereas generalisations should therefore be avoided; whereas focusing on the age of 65 as the upper age limit for data collection often does not correspond to the reality of older people’s economic and social activities, making for incomplete and inaccurate data; whereas older people are absent from many statistics and data-gathering exercises, as it is common not to collect statistics for people over 65; whereas this is no longer adequate in the light of the growing share of the population living to an older age;

AN. whereas although the educational gender gap is favourable to women in most European countries, women nonetheless pay a maternity labour penalty while men have paternity labour bonuses on activity rates and wages; whereas showing the difficulties women face in making maternity compatible with the development of a professional career, diminishing the available options both for maternity and the development of a professional career, is important; whereas juggling a career and maternity usually ends up with women postponing maternity age, decreasing the potential number of children, or with women remaining childless; whereas all of these factors decrease fertility rates below the replacement rate with the subsequent ageing of the population;

AO. whereas the number of people who are dependent on the assistance of others or have health and long-term care needs increases with age; whereas the share of individuals in need of such services is higher in those aged 80 or over; whereas dependence is exacerbated by ageing, but is also affected by other elements, such as socio-economic and environmental factors as well as educational attainment, interpersonal relations and personal well-being; whereas the needs for care and support are diverse and the appropriate means to ensure autonomy and independence differ; whereas the vast majority of care for older dependent people is being provided by informal, usually unpaid female carers aged 60 or over themselves;

AP. whereas informal and formal care systems are under pressure from demographic change, compounded by shortages of formal care workers; whereas Eurofound research shows the need to provide access to home or community care for people with minor long-term care needs, not only to support informal carers and to improve quality of life for care receivers, but also to quickly spot and respond to emerging needs;

AQ. whereas there is no uniform definition of dependence in the EU; whereas older age does not necessarily equal dependence;

AR. whereas some older people cannot benefit from active ageing measures and policies owing to various factors such as their place of residence, the state of their health, a lack of motivation, and the lack of habit of or opportunities for regular physical, mental, cultural or social activity and recreation; whereas older people may also face difficulties in accessing sports, culture and physical rehabilitation centres and have to contend with financial constraints or the lack or inadequacy of activities adapted to their individual psychophysical conditions; whereas an effective active ageing strategy should have a positive impact on older people, society and the economy as a whole;

AS. whereas creating conditions for healthy ageing and self-reliance for women and men through a comprehensive approach to old age as a life stage, as well as adapting housing and local environments in a way that allows older people to live in their own home and its surroundings for as long as possible, will bring systemic and individual benefits;

AT. whereas care and support should aim to maintain the autonomy, independence and well-being of older people; whereas the idea of ageing in place in one’s community in an age-friendly environment is of key importance to urban planning and enhancing the transition from institutional care to community-based services; whereas, moreover, the possibilities for maintaining autonomy and independence depend on conditions such as age-friendly environments, accessibility and the affordability of services, including quality housing and community-based care; whereas demographic change requires suitable responses to specific health needs and for support services and facilities;

AU. whereas non-standard forms of work have been spreading and, while providing flexibility to carry out care responsibilities, they do not always respond to working people’s needs, and whereas the impossibility of organising a care agenda makes it more difficult for women to combine maternity and work;

AV. whereas the accumulation of health risks, injuries and chronic illnesses throughout one’s life increases the risk of disability; whereas older people consult general practitioners and medical specialists more often, but also report greater difficulties in accessing medical services in some Member States than the average population due to, inter alia, the price of medical services, long distances and long waiting lists\(^1\); whereas investment in the care economy is essential to ensure a decent life for all those in need of care and carers; whereas people in older age groups are more vulnerable and thus susceptible to disease and to complications and fatalities linked to different diseases, including COVID-19; whereas COVID-19 has highlighted the need for more robust health systems and more intensive care capacity; whereas in this context, access to

\(^1\) Eurostat, *Ageing Europe: Looking at the lives of older people in the EU*, 2019, p. 70.
medical treatment and the provision of personal protective equipment in long-term care facilities should be ensured as a matter of urgency;

**AW.** whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that accessible and high-quality public services and care services are an effective response to the population’s needs, including those of older people who, in a number of circumstances during the pandemic, have experienced and continue to experience age discrimination in accessing medical and care services, including obstacles to medical treatment in general; whereas the COVID-19 pandemic once more shed light on the lack of adequate housing, quality care facilities and sufficient care and support services; whereas the highest shares of COVID-19 infections and deaths in the EU relate to nursing and care homes, residential services for older people and persons with disabilities, and other social services; whereas many older people have died during the pandemic as a result of many intensive care units being overwhelmed; whereas in some cases, one of the main criteria for the decision on the availability of intensive care treatment was the age of the patient; whereas many older people have faced obstacles in accessing medical treatment other than for COVID-19 and whereas care services in general have been reduced or halted altogether during the pandemic;

**AX.** whereas the ageing population of the EU brings new challenges for gender equality, as women continue to be the main providers of care (both paid and unpaid); whereas the coronavirus crisis has exacerbated this situation;

**AY.** whereas older people are less resistant to extreme weather events such as repeated heat waves;

**The right to age with dignity**

**AZ.** whereas guaranteeing a dignified life means securing the right to a timely retirement for workers, enabling them to enjoy a healthy and independent retirement; whereas the right to retirement must be linked to working time and not be dependent on variations in average life expectancy or any other reason used to put pressure on workers; whereas the enjoyment of retirement time should be based on an income that makes decent living conditions possible, including health protection, cultural enrichment and the acquisition of new skills, enabling pensioners to be fully included in the social environment in which they live;

**BA.** whereas living with dignity, particularly for older people, cannot be disconnected from the right to accessible housing, in sanitary and comfortable conditions, enabling older people to grow old with social and family protections; whereas in a number of situations involving pressure from property speculation, older people have been the first to be evicted, which has increased their social isolation and functional dependency;

**BB.** whereas women are at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion on account of, among other factors, the persisting problem of gender employment, the wage and pension gap,

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more career interruptions due to family and care responsibilities, and more part-time\(^1\), sometimes precarious and temporary employment\(^2\), notably in the case of single mothers; whereas these factors make it difficult for many women to save money for later in life and make them particularly vulnerable to old age poverty;

BC. whereas according to Eurostat, women receive lower pensions than men in all EU Member States; whereas women in the EU aged 65 and over receive a pension that is on average 30 % lower than that of men;

BD. whereas a 2019 Eurobarometer survey shows that 40 % of people in the EU feel discriminated against on the grounds of age; whereas ageism is present at different levels and manifests itself in different forms, including in individual approaches and the perception of oneself and in relations between generations; whereas ageism has been shown to reduce health and life expectancy and hinder full participation in social, cultural and civil life, and can lead to restrictions on older people’s access to services or active participation in the labour market both at national and EU level and services in the workplace, giving rise to marginalisation and social exclusion; whereas according to the most recent European Working Conditions Survey, age discrimination was the most common form of discrimination in the workplace; whereas other forms of discrimination highlighted by older people include access to financial products and services, healthcare, education, training and leisure\(^3\); whereas successfully combating age discrimination and age stereotypes including in the labour market is essential for active ageing, for engendering more solidarity between generations, and for making use of the experience acquired by older workers; whereas strengthening equal access to goods and services is also essential in this regard;

BE. whereas according to the WHO, active ageing is the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age, allowing people to realise their potential for well-being throughout their lives and to participate in society according to their needs, desires and capabilities, while providing them with adequate protection, security and care when they need assistance;

BF. whereas the EU and several Member States are playing an active part in considerations regarding new international instruments to protect the rights of older persons; whereas such international deliberations should be actively supported and encouraged; whereas while Directive 2000/78/EC establishes a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, it fails to address discrimination in other spheres of social life and multiple discrimination;

BG. whereas older people sometimes fall victim to violence, abuse and other worrying acts, such as fraud and unfair business practices, deprivation of legal capacity and the means to manage their own affairs; whereas the phenomenon of abuse against older people

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\(^1\) In 2018, 30.5 % of women and 9.2 % of men worked part-time in the EU-27 (Eurostat, Labour Force Survey).

\(^2\) The share of temporary contracts for people aged 15-64 has been stable in recent years. In 2018, it amounted to 12.1 % of total employment. The share among women is slightly higher (13.1 %) than for men (11.2 %) (Eurostat).

\(^3\) European Agency for Fundamental Rights, bulletins on the fundamental rights implications of the Coronavirus pandemic in the EU: No 3 of June 2020 focusing on older people and No 6 of 30 November 2020 focusing on social rights.
should be better covered by data and research on its incidence and ways to prevent it; whereas efforts to produce more comprehensive data on the mistreatment of older people are necessary;

BH. whereas the EU is funding pilot initiatives, such as EUROPeAN, MILCEA and WeDO, in the field of combating crime against older people;

BI. whereas older people in rural or remote areas may face higher age-related risks, including poverty, poorer access to quality healthcare and services, less social support, fewer opportunities for social interaction and a lack of access to public transport services;

**Employment and active ageing**

BJ. whereas according to a 2012 Eurobarometer survey, 60 % of people in the EU were against raising the statutory retirement age while 61 % were of the opinion that everyone should be able to continue working beyond the statutory retirement age; whereas depending on their financial needs, almost half of workers aged 50 or over would prefer to work fewer hours, while a significant proportion of retired people would prefer to work at least a few hours per week¹; whereas working past retirement age is associated with workplace policies supporting employability and workers staying in employment longer if they wish to do so; whereas the hiring rates of older workers who are not in employment are, however, extremely low and whereas older workers are at high risk of becoming long-term unemployed; whereas the poverty and social exclusion rates for persons aged between 55 and 64 are higher than the EU average for all ages; whereas 56 % of people in the EU are worried that their income in old age will not be sufficient²; whereas the likelihood of finding a new job decreases with age, partly on account of structural barriers including age discrimination³; whereas data shows that people who are retired but continue to work out of choice have a higher level of life satisfaction than fully retired people on average⁴; whereas the sense of purpose in life generally declines after the age of 50, but remains much stronger for individuals who continue to work after retirement or have childcare or long-term care responsibilities⁵; whereas combating unemployment among older workers in the EU remains very important;

BK. whereas appropriate working and employment conditions, including improved occupational health and safety, a better work-life balance, an age-appropriate working environment, lower quantitative demands and working time autonomy, may enable and encourage older people to stay in the labour market if they wish to do so;

BL. whereas specific attention needs to be paid to the needs of workers in very physically or psychologically demanding jobs; whereas this issue can be addressed through occupational health and safety strategies, policies supporting work-life balance, access to and take-up of education and training opportunities at work or outside of it, support

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¹ Eurofound article of 19 May 2021 entitled ‘Retirement’.
² Eurofound, European Quality of Life Survey 2016, p. 79.
³ Eurofound, European Quality of Life Survey 2016, p. 77.
⁴ Eurofound, European Quality of Life Survey 2016, p. 15.
for intergenerational exchanges in workplaces and the option to retire progressively, which will bring both individual and societal benefits;

BM. whereas an older EU with a smaller workforce may put pressure on public budgets and social security and healthcare systems; whereas it is estimated that the total cost of ageing\(^1\) will be 26.7% of GDP by 2070\(^2\); whereas a study conducted for the Commission in 2018 on the silver economy (people aged 50 and over) estimates that the contribution of the EU silver economy to GDP will reach EUR 6.4 trillion and 88 million jobs by 2025; whereas this would be equivalent to 32% of EU GDP and 38% of employment in the EU\(^3\);

BN. whereas promoting a life-cycle perspective and raising awareness of the importance of age-friendly working environments among employers is essential for active ageing; whereas the fight against unemployment among young and older people remains a key challenge in many regions; whereas the EU and the Member States still need to produce an adequate response to challenges in the labour market; whereas there is a need to adapt the skills of older workers, who are particularly threatened by economic restructuring, and to pursue policies to support the labour market mobility of older people, especially in terms of re-employment;

BO. whereas employers are often reluctant to offer adequate training to older workers; whereas lifelong learning contributes to active ageing and allows people to work and fully participate in society; whereas Parliament has adopted a resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing ‘Erasmus+’;

BP. whereas ensuring quality employment, including decent wages, occupational health and safety and a good work-life balance for workers throughout their careers, is a prerequisite for a sustainable working life and active and healthy ageing after retirement; whereas this entails not only reducing the incidence of occupational risks, but also encouraging and supporting health-promoting habits among workers and addressing risks such as psychosocial risks and musculoskeletal disorders; whereas the health and performance of older workers is not determined by their age, but by a series of closely related factors, such as individual lifestyle and exposure to hazards in the workplace\(^4\); whereas quality jobs as well as safe and healthy workplaces are not only important for the well-being of workers, but also for the competitiveness of companies and the sustainability of welfare systems;

BQ. whereas the impact of demographic change in the labour market has underlined the importance of further improving business management and working methods, as well as the significant role of digital solutions such as teleworking, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as they offer numerous opportunities to enhance the working conditions of employees, including for those close to the age of retirement, and provide

\(^1\) In the 2018 Ageing Report, the total cost of ageing is defined as being calculated on the basis of public spending on pensions, healthcare, long-term care, education and unemployment benefits.


\(^3\) Commission report of 12 April 2018 on the silver economy.

\(^4\) European Agency for Safety and Health at Work report of 4 October 2016 entitled ‘The ageing workforce: Implications for occupational safety and health – A research review’.
a more inclusive work environment, especially for work-life balance purposes and persons with disabilities;

BR. whereas regions with high unemployment rates are characterised by higher ageing rates and a shrinking population;

BS. whereas employed workers in the 55-64 age group represented 59.1 % of the labour force in the EU in 2019; whereas in 2016, around one third of managers of family farms were aged 65 or over, and the majority (57 %) were aged at least 55 or over; whereas only 1 in 10 farm managers were under the age of 40;

**Tackling demographic challenges with the support of EU funds**

BT. whereas programmes, projects and actions that promote active ageing strategies should be reflected in all policy fields and whereas the Member States should make use of all available EU instruments, such as the European structural and investment funds, in particular the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the Connecting Europe Facility, to tackle demographic challenges; whereas EU funds facilitate the provision of essential infrastructure;

BU. whereas initiatives such as the Access City Award encourage the adaptation of public spaces to the needs of older people and persons with reduced mobility and have a positive effect on their independence; whereas such initiatives not only improve the quality of their lives, ensure their social inclusion and guarantee their equal enjoyment of fundamental rights, but can also have a positive economic effect;

BV. whereas the number of single-person households has increased by 19 % since 2010; whereas in 2019, 40 % of women in the EU aged 65 or over lived alone, which is more than double the share of men living alone; whereas in many Member States, housing for young people, single people, older people and persons with disabilities, chronic diseases and functional limitations is inadequate due to accessibility problems, low-quality standards or the high cost of living and housing; whereas dwellings should be affordable, accessible, safe and comfortable, all of which are particularly important factors, not only for older people; whereas many older people are less likely to renovate their homes if they are not owners;

BW. whereas human rights are universal, inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and belong to all people and to all generations, without discrimination on any grounds; whereas older people, including persons with disabilities, are valuable to society and therefore should participate in society to the fullest extent and live their lives with dignity and as independently as possible; whereas solidarity between generations should guide the recovery of the EU with a view to achieving a fairer, more inclusive and more resilient society that leaves no one behind;

BX. whereas all Member States and the EU are parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and thus legally bound to guarantee individual autonomy,

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non-discrimination, full and effective participation in society and equal opportunities and accessibility; whereas there are over 80 million persons with disabilities in the European Union, the majority of whom are women and girls, and whereas most disabilities are acquired with age; whereas older persons with disabilities are at higher risk of poverty and discrimination; whereas policies on ageing must ensure the protection and social inclusion of persons with disabilities, as well as their access to the labour market and services; whereas mobility is key to fostering independent living and autonomy; whereas ensuring a fully accessible transport chain from door to door is critical;

BY. whereas neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia, remain underdiagnosed in most European countries; whereas there is a clear indication that the current number of nine million confirmed cases of dementia will double by 2050; whereas dementia is the leading cause of dependency and disability among older people in the European Union and currently affects around 10 million people, and whereas its prevalence is expected to double by 2030;

BZ. whereas the CAP remains the key instrument to support the rural economy and job creation in rural areas;

CA. whereas our food security depends on successful generational renewal in agriculture;

**Combating discrimination against older people**

1. Stresses that valuing older people and tackling discrimination against them is only possible through social, cultural and economic inclusion policies which focus on providing fair pensions that ensure a good quality of life; stresses, therefore, the importance of public social security systems that are distributive and based on contributive solidarity between generations, providing everyone, regardless of their own contributions (which is particularly relevant, for example, for women who have spent their careers working as carers), with a decent quality of life free from poverty and social exclusion;

2. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to strengthen their efforts to combat all forms of discrimination against older people, particularly against women, especially in the areas of employment, access to financial products and services, healthcare, housing, promoting autonomy, education, training and leisure activities; calls, furthermore, on the Commission and the Member States to promote a positive perception of old age in society and the social inclusion of older people by stimulating age-friendly environments in the EU through appropriate measures, and to support the exchange of good practices at all governance levels and strengthen their support for the silver economy in the EU; calls on the Commission to follow up on the implementation report of Directive 2000/78/EC after 20 years with a view to strengthening the framework for age discrimination in employment and occupation;

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3. Stresses the importance of gender equality, gender mainstreaming and the protection of minority rights with regard to tackling demographic challenges;

4. Regrets the existing gender pension gap and asks the Member States to put forward concrete measures to tackle it, including by combating the gender pay gap and increasing women’s employment rate through work-life balance measures, combating precarious and informal work, and ensuring a minimum income for all;

5. Stresses that an extension of the legal retirement age does not represent an adequate tool for addressing and resolving the current economic and social crisis, as it could result in the further deterioration of the fundamental rights of older workers;

6. Stresses that in order to provide more opportunities for women in rural areas, it is essential to maintain the existing sub-programme dedicated to that end in the next multiannual financial framework; asks in particular for support to be provided to women farmers through measures to promote access to land, installation support and social security coverage;

7. Calls on the Commission and the Council to establish a Year of Intergenerational Solidarity and Active Ageing complementing and building on the aims and spirit of the European Day of Solidarity between Generations and the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, in order to raise awareness about the problems older people face and promote strategies to mitigate them, as well as to eliminate stereotypes and prejudice, strengthen the links and solidarity between the generations, counteract social exclusion and address sexual health issues; stresses the importance of this initiative in not only the context of demographic change, but also the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit vulnerable groups, including older people and their carers, particularly hard; also invites the Member States to consult with academic experts and civil society organisations when addressing demographic challenges; calls on the Commission and the Council to swiftly implement the Council conclusions on the human rights, participation and well-being of older persons in the era of digitalisation, including the creation of a ‘platform for participation and volunteering after working life’ and the promotion of intergenerational exchanges and ties;

8. Recalls that the gender pension gap resulting from the gender pay gap stands at 37% and stems from accumulated inequalities throughout the course of women’s working lives and from the periods of absence from the labour market that are imposed on women as a result of multiple forms of inequality and discrimination; stresses the need to urgently address this gap in the light of demographic change given that its impacts will be acutely felt by older women for a long time to come;

9. Welcomes the Commission’s Green Paper of 27 January 2021 entitled ‘Ageing: Fostering solidarity and responsibility between generations’ (COM(2021)0050); calls on the Commission to prepare an EU action plan on demographic change and solidarity between generations, taking into account the diversity and complexity of the situation in specific age groups as well as differences in the Member States; underlines that such a plan should be socially inclusive and aimed at enabling dignified, active and healthy ageing and should be developed in line with the WHO’s Decade of Healthy Ageing with the involvement of representatives of all generations; calls on the Commission and the Member States to pay particular attention to the situation of older people when implementing the Sustainable Development Goals; reiterates its call on the Member
States to adopt without further delay the proposed Council directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, which is essential for combating discrimination on all grounds and in all spheres of social life and for fighting multiple discrimination;

10. Recalls that demographic change is a phenomenon which does not concern only older people in rural areas but in fact all generations, regardless of their place of residence; stresses therefore the importance of a life-cycle approach of related policies covering all regions, including urban areas;

11. Considers that the long-term vision for rural areas will need to place particular emphasis on programmes for the active involvement of older people in rural community life;

12. Stresses the need to better investigate and prevent violence against older people;

13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ratify and implement the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence;

Health and long-term care for older people

14. Highlights that older women are more affected by the high costs of long-term care as women’s life expectancy is higher, while their health outcomes at the end of life are lower, increasing their need for long-term care and assistance; recalls also that women make up the vast majority of informal carers, leaving in particular older women of working age with fewer opportunities to access the labour market and to build up their own pension entitlements;

15. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure a decent life for dependent persons; underlines the need to promote strategies on personalised quality support for dependent persons; stresses that the specific needs of persons with different diseases, including neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s and dementia, from diagnosis to treatment and long-term care, should be taken into account;

16. Points out the importance of flexible forms of work in allowing women and men to reconcile work and family life, and the need for awareness-raising campaigns on the equal division of domestic work and care and nursing, better investment in care infrastructure and equal, non-transferrable and remunerated maternity and paternity leave in order to makes advances in better sharing paid and unpaid work by gender;

17. Stresses the need to combat gender segmentation in the labour market, particularly for future-oriented, highly paid careers such as the science, engineering, technology and mathematics (STEM), ICT and digital sectors; stresses the importance of education in these areas throughout the life course, including for older women, in order to increase their continued participation in the labour market;

18. Calls on the Member States to ensure equal access to health and care services, including at home, as well as residential or community-based long-term care and palliative care, without discrimination on any grounds;
19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to safeguard and advance sexual and reproductive rights and ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and commodities;

20. Calls on the Commission to take an evidence- and human-rights-based approach to tackling demographic challenges in the EU, ensuring that all EU residents can fully realise their sexual and reproductive health and rights; condemns any attempt to instrumentalise demographic change in order to undermine gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and calls on the Commission and the Council to uphold Union values in this regard;

21. Underlines the paramount importance of fully protecting the right to care and support for older people, enabling their access to affordable, quality and holistic care and support services, adapted to individual needs, and promoting well-being, autonomy, independence and community inclusion, without any form of discrimination; emphasises the key role of adequately funded social protection schemes in making care affordable and truly accessible;

22. Calls on the Commission to put forward a care deal for Europe and a European carers’ programme aimed at making the transition towards a care economy that entails relevant investment and legislation at EU level, taking a comprehensive approach towards all care needs and services and setting quality guidelines for care throughout the life course, including for children, older persons and persons with long-term needs, with a view to identifying and recognising the various types of informal care-giving, and guaranteeing financial support for carers, appropriate periods of leave and affordable services, among other things;

23. Calls for the adoption of the necessary measures to promote higher employment rates among women, such as affordable care and childcare, adequate periods of parental leave, and flexibility in working hours and places of work also for men; points out that, according to OECD projections, total convergence in participation rates would result in a 12.4% increase in per capita GDP by 2030;

24. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to pursue a Health in All Policies approach, assessing the health impact of policy choices in all relevant areas;

25. Recalls that higher birth rates require more job opportunities, stable employment and housing, decent working and living conditions, flexible work arrangements, generous family support and paid parental leave for both parents, quality childcare from the early years onwards, and an equal distribution of unpaid care and domestic responsibilities between men and women; stresses that in the light of demographic changes and the projected increases in life expectancy, it is key to ensure women’s full participation in the labour market without career breaks, interruptions or moves to part-time and temporary work, as this will lower women’s risk of poverty in old age; urges, therefore, the Member States to swiftly and fully transpose and implement the Work-Life Balance Directive and invites them to go beyond the minimum standards laid down in the directive;

26. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to further explore user-friendly, safe and accessible assistive digital technologies, telecare and telemedicine, especially in regions affected by demographic decline and remote regions; underlines that the use of
these technologies should be fully consistent with the existing data protection framework, while ethical issues pertaining to the use of technology in health should always be duly taken into account; encourages the Member States to set up day-care centres for older people close to schools and nurseries, which could foster intergenerational ties;

27. Believes that every person should have the right to choose quality care services that are suitable for them and their family; believes that the approach to the development of care services should take into account all categories of users and their differences and the wide range of preferences for the types of care services they require; notes that care services should be developed so as to enhance the continuity of care, preventive healthcare, rehabilitation and independent living;

28. Calls for a regulatory framework that guarantees quality care services, telecare and telemedicine by providing care professionals with legal safeguards and laying down the necessary requirements for training, with the purpose of securing care and primary care for all EU citizens, whatever their age, across all geographical areas;

29. Encourages the Member States to support flexible, adequate and tailor-made care models, and stresses that active, healthy ageing, well-being and the employability of older people of working age are essential to ensuring the sustainability of social security and care systems; calls on the Member States to support the development of age-friendly environments and home, family-based and community-based care solutions, including for persons with dementia, to develop a public network of support services and medical equipment, to promote mobility, independent living, social inclusion and autonomy, and to facilitate civil society and social economy initiatives on these issues;

30. Calls on the Member States to better acknowledge the value of informal care, to improve social protection and the various forms of support for informal carers, to provide professional support, training and peer counselling for informal carers, and to introduce, in close cooperation with social partners, different forms of periodic relief for family members caring for older people, especially those needing respite care and day-care services, and support services including flexible working arrangements; encourages the Member States to put forward targeted strategies to help informal carers and recognise their contribution to care for older people, and to put forward proposals for adequate relief services; emphasises that providing informal care should be a choice and that formal care services should be promoted;

31. Encourages the Member States to develop volunteering and assistance for older people, as this has a special role to play in crisis situations, as demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic;

32. Calls on the Member States to combat poverty among women, especially in later life, which has a negative impact both on women’s social security and the EU’s GDP levels, and to ensure that workers enjoy appropriate social protection;

33. Calls on the Member States to ensure access to rehabilitation and reintegration services with a view to supporting older workers to return to the labour market after health-related career breaks if they wish to do so, since active ageing is key to health;
34. Stresses that the feminisation of poverty is the result of several factors, including gender inequalities in career progression, the fact that women are often employed on non-standard contracts, the absence of social security status for partners assisting self-employed workers, and poverty in households headed by single mothers;

35. Stresses that the COVID-19 outbreak has served as evidence of how essential it is for Member States to have robust, inclusive and crisis-proof health systems; calls on the Member States to ensure there are a sufficient number of professionals in the field of health and care services and to ensure access to geriatric medicine throughout the EU; calls on the Member States to ensure adequate working and employment conditions in medical and care occupations and to invest in education and training as a means of guaranteeing the quality of care provided; calls for the creation of incentives to take up the profession of carer for older people;

Social protection and social inclusion

36. Calls on the Member States to guarantee a decent standard of living for older people, and in that regard calls on them to share their best practices, in particular as regards the setting of minimum pensions;

37. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop recommendations on reducing the risk of poverty and social exclusion in older age, focusing especially on the gender pension gap, older persons with disabilities, older migrants, older Roma, older persons belonging to ethnic, racial, linguistic or sexual minorities and other groups that are disproportionately affected by poverty and social exclusion; encourages the Social Protection Committee to dedicate more analysis to groups facing high rates of poverty and social exclusion;

Active ageing

38. Stresses that the creation and implementation of age-appropriate lifelong learning opportunities is a vital and indispensable element for enhancing social and economic sustainability and personal welfare; calls on the Member States to invest in skills and education and to develop formal, non-formal and informal educational, training and lifelong learning projects, as well as opportunities for better integration for older people, including online education, whether they are still part of the labour market or are already retired;

39. Emphasises, in this context, the need to strengthen the digital skills of older people, which can help them not only to benefit from online education, but also improves their access to healthcare and other digital services; calls for accessible and affordable digital skills programmes catered to the needs of older people; calls on the Commission to take specific actions targeting older people; calls, furthermore, on the Commission and the Member States to support upskilling and reskilling initiatives, in particular for vulnerable groups, in order to help people find a quality job and in order to meet the needs of the labour market, counter the digital gap and ensure that these persons effectively adapt and benefit from innovative management and working methods and digital solutions, such as teleworking;

40. Calls on the Member States to use the ESF+ and ERDF funds to support the creation of quality jobs, promote a better work-life balance and provide job opportunities in regions
at risk of depopulation, with special attention paid to improving the labour market participation of women; stresses the importance of counselling services, lifelong learning and programmes for reskilling and upskilling workers at all ages;

41. Calls on the Member States and the European Network of Public Employment Services to develop exchanges of practices in integrating older jobseekers into the labour market;

42. Welcomes the Commission’s commitment to decent wages for all workers, either through statutory minimum wages or collective bargaining;

43. Underlines that tackling demographic change should follow a rights-based approach, promoting and creating equal opportunities, dialogue and solidarity instead of competition between people of different generations;

44. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the proper implementation of the Work-Life Balance Directive and to support regional and local initiatives and projects aimed at striking a better balance between work and private life for men and women;

45. Welcomes the Commission’s proposal to launch a programme for ‘digital volunteers’ to enable young qualified people and experienced senior citizens to share their digital skills with traditional businesses; encourages the Member States to develop volunteering and mentoring to transfer knowledge between generations, in order to counteract social exclusion and allow the sharing of skills and experience, encourage the upgrading of the skills of younger and older workers and preserve traditional crafts as part of Europe’s heritage;

46. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to bridge the digital divide and further explore the possibilities for social inclusion and integration into the labour market of older people of working age, particularly those who are housebound, by using the internet, other information technologies and artificial intelligence for cultural, entertainment, education, work, communication and medical purposes, including telecare and telemedicine in a safe manner, and ensuring the highest level of protection of personal data, while acknowledging the importance of direct personal contact and a dignified and human-centric approach; calls in particular for strategies to improve digital skills, connectivity and access to devices in long-term care settings;

47. Notes that improving the connectivity and accessibility of services in rural and remote areas is crucial to addressing the depopulation of these regions and the social and digital exclusion of the older population living there; calls, therefore, on the Member States to recognise the significance of rural and remote areas in all their diversity, and to develop their potential through stimulating investments in the local economy, fostering entrepreneurship and improving their infrastructure;

48. Calls on the Commission to support the Member States in fighting poverty, which particularly affects single mothers and has been further increased by the crisis, leading to greater social exclusion;

49. Underlines the essential impact constantly evolving digital technologies have on people’s daily lives, and thus stresses the need for high-speed internet and vital and up-to-date technological equipment in schools, hospitals and all other relevant public services facilities, including effective e-governance; considers the possibilities created by lifelong learning, in combination with digitalisation, essential to provide the ageing population in rural and remote areas with various opportunities, including supplementary income; calls, therefore, on the Commission and the Member States to support educational and training programmes that help the ageing population to develop skills and gain knowledge in areas such as e-commerce, online marketing and ICT; calls on the Member States to ensure that all households have access to high-speed internet and digital equipment and to advance the acquisition of digital skills, especially for vulnerable groups;

50. Considers that the EU’s green and digital transition should harness the full potential of ageing rural communities; recalls, in this regard, the importance of ensuring access to broadband internet and basic services in rural areas, the uptake of e-skills and new approaches to sustainable development, such as the concept of smart villages and sustainable food system transformation;

51. Highlights that as a result of the evolution, digitalisation and specialisation of agriculture, both people within the sector and those in the process of entering into it require an appropriate level of digital, technical and economic training, and calls for the promotion of exchange schemes, discussions, online training courses and e-learning;

52. Calls on the Member States to take into account the specific situation of older workers in the labour market through measures such as individualised training and optimised working hours;

53. Calls on the Commission to support the Member States in the increasing use of the structural funds for investment in public childcare and care for older and dependent people;

54. Calls on the Member States to support the functioning and development of older people’s organisations and other forms of social participation;

55. Calls on the Commission and the Social Protection Committee to delve deeper into non-standard labour market trajectories in the next Pension Adequacy Report, fully analysing the gender gap in pensions in all its dimensions and in all the three pillars of pension systems; calls further on the Commission to assess the adequacy of minimum pensions, which are particularly relevant to avoiding old-age poverty;

56. Underlines that the emerging silver economy could turn into one of the main economic drivers, particularly in rural areas, and could provide opportunities for the health and long-term care sectors to offer high-quality care in a more efficient way; calls on the Commission and the Member States to take into account the potential of the silver economy in EU and national strategies and to promote it more vigorously, including in tourism and cultural exchanges geared towards older people;

57. Recalls that the outermost regions are especially predisposed to depopulation and require a special set of measures to mitigate the negative demographic changes they
often face; calls on the Member States to proactively use the available structural and investment funds in order to address the challenges these regions encounter;

58. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to involve organisations representing and safeguarding the interests of older people when making decisions which affect them;

59. Stresses that teleworking can offer numerous opportunities to remote areas, with it being one of the best ways to utilise digital technologies in order to maintain the population of rural and remote areas and at the same time benefit local communities and their economies; calls on the Commission to put forward an EU teleworking agenda with a view to developing a legislative framework laying down clear minimum standards and conditions for remote work across the EU;

60. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to mainstream the rights of older persons with disabilities into all disability- and ageing-related policies and programmes, ensuring full compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

Special policies and research

61. Calls on the Member States to use EU funds and private investments combined with national and local investments to provide affordable, adequate, safe and accessible housing and to adapt buildings to the needs of older, vulnerable and disadvantaged people; stresses that buildings should have accessibility features; stresses that safe housing is housing where the possibility of dangers has been reduced and where responding to danger is made easier; recalls that accessible housing should go hand in hand with adequate infrastructure;

62. Underlines the indispensable role regional and local authorities have in addressing the ever-deepening demographic issues in rural and remote areas in a meaningful and sustainable way;

63. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote best practices for an efficient ageing policy;

64. Calls on the Member States to promote initiatives to strengthen intergenerational bonds and to support older people who, for health or financial reasons, have to leave their homes to find affordable housing that meets their needs;

65. Calls on the Member States to take the gender dimension into account when reforming pension systems and adapting the retirement age, considering the differences between women and men in work patterns and the higher risk of discrimination against older women in the labour market;

66. Calls on the Member States to prevent and redress violence against older women as part of their national responses to COVID-19, including helplines and support services, paying particular attention to residential care settings;

67. Asks the Commission and the Member States to create effective programmes for combating violence against women that incorporate the age dimension in order to prevent the physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse that can be inflicted on
older people, most of whom are women; proposes that statistical surveys be carried out on the increase in violence against older people with the aim of shedding light on this serious problem – which older people are normally incapable of reporting, since they may accept the ill-treatment they suffer as part and parcel of being old and dependent – and with a view to combating abuse against older people more effectively and with greater commitment on the part of society as a whole;

68. Emphasises that sheltered and supported housing can be conducive to the deinstitutionalisation of care; calls on the Member States to explore the possibilities to promote sheltered, supported and intergenerational housing, as well as housing adaptations based on quality criteria;

69. Encourages the Member States to carry out information and education campaigns and actions dedicated to older people on road safety, showing the impact of physiological changes and the deterioration of psychomotor skills on the ability to move around on the road, thus improving safety for all road users;

70. Encourages the Member States to increase spending from the ESF+, the ERDF and the Just Transition Fund for the training and retraining of older workers, ensuring equal access to public services, with particular emphasis being placed on encouraging companies to employ older workers and adapting public infrastructure, including transport, and public spaces to the needs of older people; invites the Member States to promote investments in public services in rural areas with the aid of structural funds, which would attract the younger generation and increase the well-being of older people living in these areas; calls for greater use of European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funds to counteract the isolation and social exclusion of older people in rural and disadvantaged areas, with a special focus on areas at risk of depopulation; invites the Member States to take advantage of the possibilities offered by Next Generation EU in that respect;

71. Underlines the importance of adequate, reliable and comparable data as a basis of policies and measures for tackling demographic challenges; calls on the Commission to revise the EU statistical framework by increasing the upper age limit for the collection of data, ensuring the inclusion of persons living in institutions and providing disaggregated data by gender and age, with full respect for privacy and fundamental rights standards; calls on the Commission and the Member States to collect more data and to step up their support for the development of research into healthy ageing and old-age related diseases and the living conditions of older people;

72. Welcomes the European Pillar of Social Rights action plan and calls for the swift and effective implementation of the principles outlined in the pillar; calls on the Commission, with a view to improving and strengthening the representation of older people in the EU law-making process and mirroring the existing EU Youth Parliament, to consider EU Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme funding for such an initiative;

73. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to focus their actions on increasing the healthy life years of older people; underlines, in this respect, the importance of programmes for lifelong health promotion and education, disease prevention and regular examination and to undertake new initiatives such as better disease prevention policies and more effective healthcare programmes to stimulate the process of healthy ageing;
calls on the Commission and the Member States to actively engage in the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing by drawing up healthy ageing plans in the EU that cover access to health and care services, as well as strategies for health promotion and prevention; calls on the Commission to set up an ambitious research agenda on physical and mental health as part of the Horizon Europe programme; encourages the Member States to consider using the funds provided by the multiannual financial framework and Next Generation EU for this purpose;

74. Calls on the Member States to encourage intergenerational exchange by, among other endeavours, promoting voluntary work by younger people for older people, and to foster and finance intergenerational centres, as these can be crucial for fighting age discrimination and ensuring the social inclusion of older people; encourages the Member States to set up community care centres and volunteering and lifelong learning opportunities targeting older people close to schools and nurseries, and to work to foster intergenerational ties by encouraging exchanges between these services; urges the Member States and the Commission to promote programmes, projects and actions that further the social, cultural and political participation of older people;

75. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote and support an inclusive labour market and societies that allow for equal participation and draw on the skills and talents of all; calls on the Member States to develop employability and career management strategies to prepare for an ageing workforce and more volatile labour markets in the light of the frequent and profound transformations in labour markets; underlines that such strategies should include the promotion of education, training and lifelong learning for persons of all ages, healthy workplaces that provide reasonable accommodation for employees with health difficulties or disabilities, a better work-life balance, and the promotion of intergenerational exchanges in the workplace; calls, moreover, for the EU Platform of Diversity Charters to place greater focus on the promotion of age and (dis)ability diversity in workplaces; calls on the Commission to emphasise psychosocial and physical, age-related risks for both women and men in the new strategic framework for health and safety in the workplace; underlines that occupational health and safety is crucial;

76. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to facilitate access to work, for those who wish to, for people aged 60 and over, in particular women, as this would increase their lifetime incomes, and to introduce part-time, low-risk professional activities for older people when they are still healthy and able to take on responsibilities; stresses the importance of creating paid employment opportunities for people who have already reached the statutory retirement age and wish to remain or get active, not only with a view to generating additional income, but also as a means to tackle social exclusion; encourages, moreover, incentives for volunteering and mentoring in order to boost knowledge transfer between generations; underlines that such measures and activities must not be at the expense of young jobseekers or the long-term unemployed;

77. Calls on the Commission to adopt an EU strategy on carers; stresses that investment in care services is essential as it will not only increase women’s employment rates, providing job opportunities in the formal economy for previously informal carers and promoting a work-life balance for women, but also improve the living conditions of older people through investment in long-term care facilities, measures to improve mental health and combat isolation, and measures to prevent and combat violence against older women, as well as investing in people’s health and education, to ensure
that they stay active and in good health as they grow older; calls on the Member States
to adopt a set of indicators for the access to and sustainability of care systems for older
people, as well as a common quality framework for older people’s care services;
stresses the importance of ensuring that care for older people remains a national
competence;

78. Calls on the Member States to devote greater attention to older people, who are
particularly vulnerable to viral infections, including COVID-19; calls on the
Commission and the Member States to combat the isolation, neglect and social
exclusion experienced by older people during the COVID-19 pandemic by promoting
awareness-raising campaigns, conducting research, facilitating exchanges of views, and
combining EU structural and investment funds; calls on the Member States,
therefore, to ensure the application of patient rights in cross-border healthcare as well
as the availability of and access to safe and affordable medicines; stresses that the
COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for more solidarity from the EU; calls
on the Commission to devise and adopt an EU charter for the rights of older people on
the basis of Article 25 of the Charter;

79. Recognises the prominent role that cohesion policy and the CAP could play in
promoting and boosting the employability and inclusion of women in rural and remote
areas faced with demographic issues; calls on the Member States to make better use of
the relevant funds to that end;

80. Calls on the Member States to use REACT-EU funds to tackle demographic change;

81. Highlights that new technologies and innovative methods could prove to be useful to
reduce the costs of services of general interest, while retaining the standard of living and
quality of services in remote and sparsely populated areas; encourages the Member
States and the relevant regional and local authorities to invest in unconventional and
innovative measures designed to provide essential services for the population and create
a suitable environment to attract people to return and reverse depopulation;

82. Calls on the Member States to enhance their exchange of best practices on the creation
of suitable demographic policies and initiatives to harness the possibilities of and
address the challenges posed by the EU’s ageing population;

83. Recalls the specific nature of family farming, which blends agricultural activity and
family life, with older farmers remaining active beyond the age of retirement;

84. Recognises the potential of older people, including farmers, to become the driving force
of a vibrant silver economy in rural areas based on social innovation, inclusive rural
communities and a healthier living environment; calls on the Commission to carefully
study this potential when building its long-term vision for rural areas and active ageing;

85. Calls on public institutions to promote the creation of a special protection system that
takes account of the specific nature of unemployment affecting agricultural workers,
owing to the very temporary nature of agricultural seasonal work; points out that this
could provide greater security for those who choose to work in agriculture;

1 COM(2020)0241, p. 20.
86. Points out that an ageing workforce and the lack of generational renewal constitute a more serious issue in agriculture than in other sectors; believes that creating new vocations to enable generational renewal, by ensuring the attractiveness and profitability of professions in the agriculture sector, is key to reversing this trend;

87. Acknowledges that only 11% of all farm holdings in the European Union are run by farmers under the age of 40\(^1\); calls on the Member States to remove all barriers preventing young farmers from entering the agricultural sector, including the difficulty of gaining access to land; calls, furthermore, on the Member States to promote new ways of collaboration between the generations such as partnerships, share-farming, long-term leasing and other arrangements which could address the lack of land and encourage young people to become farmers;

88. Reiterates that some of the obstacles to generational renewal in agriculture are linked to access to land and farm transfer from one generation to the next; recalls that older farmers faced with the risk of low pensions, loss of income (including CAP payments) and social exclusion in rural areas post-retirement tend to remain active and keep their farms longer; underlines, in this context, the need for tailored policy instruments to guarantee smooth farm transitions and active ageing for older farmers in rural communities;

89. Notes that in many Member States national pension systems do not provide retired farmers with sufficient income; regrets the fact that the extension of agricultural activity beyond the legal retirement age, which slows down generational renewal, is often the only way to deal with this situation; stresses that support under the CAP is not intended to replace a pension system;

90. Notes the growing need for highly qualified young professionals in agriculture, especially in the regions, and draws attention to the need to take all measures to encourage young people to study agricultural professions, as well as to facilitate the transfer of knowledge from older people to the younger generation;

91. Believes that farm partnerships between older and younger generations are key to deepening intergenerational solidarity, knowledge transfer and mutual learning, which is particularly important for the uptake of new technologies and digital skills in farming;

92. Considers that family workers still represent the vast majority of agricultural labour in Europe, but notes that this type of labour has been steadily declining for years and is expected to decline further in the near future; stresses that the unstoppable rural exodus from certain parts of the EU will lead to rural areas facing economic, social and environmental problems that need more ambitious and coordinated policies;

93. Stresses the importance of supporting rural areas in their diversity, encouraging investments in projects that support local economies, including better transport accessibility and digital connectivity; considers it important to recall that maintaining agricultural employment has direct implications for keeping rural economies alive; believes in addition that the challenge faced by all farmers in understanding the role of, and engaging with, modern technology and innovation in agriculture should not be

underestimated; stresses therefore the importance of lifelong vocational training, advisory services and knowledge exchange, both within and outside the framework of the CAP;

94. Considers that access to farming for women should be facilitated through appropriate public services, enabling them to work in agriculture to a greater extent;

95. Notes that an ageing population, particularly in agricultural and rural areas, is an unavoidable trend that must be taken into account when designing economic and social policies; considers that the issue of an ageing population requires a multidimensional approach, and stresses the importance of promoting wider complementarity and synergy between policy areas and support instruments; recalls that adequate resources and services are essential to provide older people with an age-friendly environment;

96. Emphasises that inequalities in access to land, direct payments and support, both between and within EU countries, are among the issues that need to be addressed in order to halt regional decline, and to encourage older people past retirement age to leave farming and young people to start farming;

97. Calls on the Member States to take into account the proportion of older people (over the age of 65) in rural regions when devising their strategic plans, and to consider introducing measures that cover or target older inhabitants in rural areas, for example through a more flexible approach to the conditions applicable to real and active participation by that age group in the economic life of the region concerned;

98. Points out that, in the light of the situation arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary to commit to a living and dynamic countryside, eliminating red tape and investing in infrastructure and quality services in rural areas in order to curb the ageing process in agriculture and promote the role of women as heads of holdings;

99. Notes that an effective mobility system is one of the prerequisites for regional economic development, territorial cohesion and the development of regional potential; points out that it is therefore necessary to provide the requisite funding for the development and maintenance of transport links, which could encourage the older generation to stay in agriculture for longer and attract young people from regional centres to work in the countryside;

100. Highlights the role and importance of the CAP in encouraging generational renewal in the agricultural sector; calls on the Member States to favour actions to increase the numbers of young farmers in their strategic plans and to promote consistency with other instruments available at national and EU level;

101. Highlights the central role played by community-led local development initiatives in restoring and keeping living and thriving local rural economies, and the need to keep a sufficient level of funding for the LEADER programme; calls on the Member States to make full use of LEADER’s capacities;

102. Notes the importance of the services provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), especially for older people; calls for the strengthening of funding for the activities of NGOs in the regions;
103. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.