



**OSCE PA Special Representative on Elderly Issues,  
Paola Taverna**

**Annual Report August 2021-July 2022**

**29th OSCE PA Annual Session, Birmingham  
2-6 July 2022**



Paola Taverna (Italy) was appointed OSCE PA Special Representative on Elderly Issues in August 2021. As Special Representative, she works to promote OSCE PA engagement on issues facing senior citizens in the OSCE area and facilitate the exchange of best practices on elderly issues. The Special Representative also strives to enhance welfare policies and support for the elderly in the OSCE area and focus the Assembly's attention on promoting measures to facilitate healthy aging.

First elected to parliament in the 2013 Italian general elections, Taverna was elected Vice-President of the Senate in March 2018.

As Special Representative on Elderly Issues, she is mandated, inter alia, to work co-operatively with relevant international organizations and authorities of OSCE participating States.

**Mandate:**

- Raise awareness in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly regarding the issues faced by the rapidly growing elderly population.
- Stimulate the Assembly on measures to facilitate healthy and active aging to maximize the opportunities that come from longevity.
- Facilitate the exchange of best practices on elderly issues and consider ways to enhance welfare policies and support for the elderly in the OSCE area.
- Co-operate and interact with relevant international organizations and competent authorities of the OSCE participating States.

In the exercise of my mandate, in order to enhance my understanding on the rapidly growing elderly population in the OSCE region and get acquainted with the best practices, issues, challenges and perspectives regarding senior citizens, I held a series of meetings with parliamentarians, governmental officials, representatives of political parties, experts and representatives of the civil society from diverse OSCE participating States. I further conducted a visit on the ground in Germany in late June to view in person housing modules for elderly citizens, co-operative housing facilities, barrier-free apartments and meet with experts on the topic. My meetings have been both in-person and online, making full use of today's modern technologies and opportunities.

I wish to reiterate my appreciation to President Margareta Cederfelt for having shown sensibility towards the importance of this topic and for having appointed me Special Representative last August.

My work as Special Representative was facilitated by the assistance of the OSCE PA International Secretariat and by the expertise of *Junior Professional Officer* Roberto Ferrari.

#### List of activities as Special Representative on Elderly Issues:

- 20 December 2021 - Web meeting with the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group for Longevity.
- 17 January 2022 - Web meeting with the Rapporteur of the 2nd Committee of the OSCE PA, Gudrun Kugler.
- 3-4 November 2021 - Interim oral report on the occasion of the OSCE PA Online Autumn Meeting.
- 21 February 2022 - Web meeting with the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO).
- 23 February 2022, Vienna - Meeting with the Commissioner for European Affairs of the Austrian Seniors' Association/ÖSB (Österreichischer Seniorenbund), Heinz Kurt Becker.
- 24 February 2022, Vienna - Meeting with the Special Representative on Youth Engagement of the OSCE PA, Farah Karimi.
- 24-25 February 2022, Vienna - Interim oral report on the occasion of the OSCE PA Winter Meeting
- 28 February 2022 - Web meeting with the Minister Delegate for Personal Independence of the French Republic, Brigitte Bourguignon.
- 4 April 2022, Copenhagen - Interim oral report on the occasion of the OSCE PA Bureau Meeting
- 17 June 2022, Rome - United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Ministerial Conference on Ageing 2022: introductory remarks on the occasion of "*the coordination of ageing policies in Italy*" side-event.

- 22 June 2022 - Web meeting with the Minister of Social Policy of Ukraine, Maryna Lazebna.
- 27-28 June 2022 - Official visit to Germany (Hanover and Hamburg).
- 3 July 2022, Birmingham - Dedicated Panel on Elderly Ukrainian refugees on the occasion of the UK Panel on Prevention of War Crimes Side Event during the 2-6 July 2022 OSCE PA Annual Session.
- 5 July 2022, Birmingham - Oral remarks on the Annual Report on Elderly Issues on the occasion of the 2-6 July 2022 OSCE PA Annual Session.

According to the World Health Organization, by 2030, 1 in 6 people in the world will be aged 60 years or over. At this time the share of the population aged 60 years and over will increase from 1 billion in 2020 to 1.4 billion. By 2050, the world's population of people aged 60 years and older will double (2.1 billion). The number of persons aged 80 years or older is expected to triple between 2020 and 2050 to reach 426 million<sup>1</sup>.

We are therefore faced with a challenging scenario which requires the implementation of measures in diverse sectors to facilitate avenues of opportunity.

Throughout my meetings, I have personally experienced the added value of sharing different approaches and ideas which may be replicated throughout our region to produce tangible results.

The idea of setting up informal working groups, which put together the experiences of civil society and the political sphere may produce added value for our citizens. Such topic was discussed during my meeting in December 2021 with the UK All Party Parliamentary Group for Longevity. In the same direction, the importance of maintaining co-operation between the civil society and the political sphere was discussed during my meeting in February 2022 with the Commissioner for European Affairs of the Austrian Seniors' Association, Heinz Kurt Becker, together with the opportunities represented by the establishment of Associations of Elderly Citizens in the context of both social and political activities.

In a similar vein, in February 2022 my meeting with BAGSO Germany and representatives of its various ramifications allowed me to explore the German approach with specific focus on its activities in the capacity of a highly structured umbrella Association of 120 civil society organizations. My meeting subsequently paved the way for a visit on the ground in late June 2022 to view concretely modern housing options for elderly citizens, which, in addition to the living space, offer a virtuous ecosystem not only for the benefit of the elderly, but also for younger generations in terms of intergenerational encounters and work opportunities.

The French approach, which I had the opportunity to discuss in February 2022 with its Minister Delegate for Personal Independence, Brigitte Bourguignon, features a strong emphasis on the topic of personal independence related to senior age, with provisions aimed at allowing senior citizens to postpone the phase of dependency, while making full use of the opportunities in terms of experience which accompany longevity.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health>

My meeting with my colleague Gudrun Kugler (Austria) in January 2022 allowed us to explore the many interlinkages of the topic of longevity with the work put forward by the Second Committee. Elderly Issues in fact present cross-dimensional characteristics and require a holistic approach.

With the Special Representative on Youth Engagement, Farah Karimi (The Netherlands) we had the opportunity to discuss on the margins of our Winter Meeting the many common aspects of our respective mandates and agreed on the relevance of keeping both topics closely connected to make the best use of the energy of younger generations, together with the experience of senior citizens.

The June 2022 Rome UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing allowed me to address participants from diverse countries in my hometown, combining my commitment to Elderly Issues in my national context as Coordinator of the Italian *all-party parliamentary group*: “Longevity. Socio-economic perspectives” with my engagement in the multilateral sphere in the context of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The tragic suffering of innocent civilians in Ukraine, which exposes women, children and the elderly population to the direst consequences was at the centre of my web meeting with the Minister of Social Policy of Ukraine, Maryna Lazebna. I expressed maximum solidarity with the Minister, who informed me about the serious difficulties faced by the Ukrainian senior citizens in the context of the war, especially for their inability to escape and adapt to emergencies. The Ministry of Social Policy managed to evacuate senior citizens from several nursing homes in the bombed areas where they were living and began the relocation work, also thanks to international solidarity.

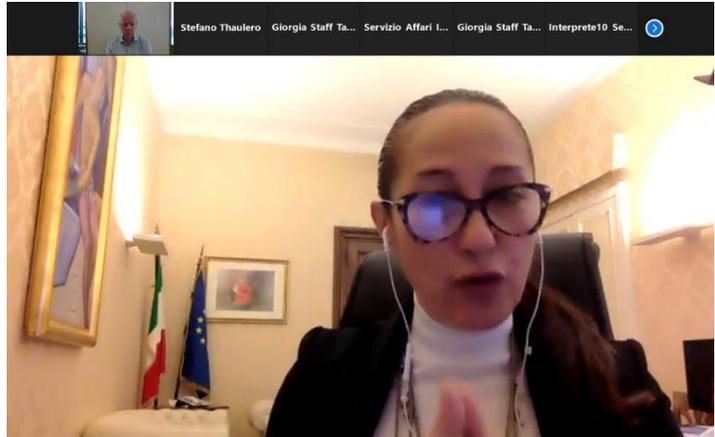
During the Annual Session in Birmingham, from 2 to 6 July 2022, I had the opportunity to elaborate upon the topic of elderly people in the Ukrainian conflict, inviting Ukrainian elderly citizens to share their personal experiences as refugees since the start of the war during a Dedicated Panel on the occasion of the Panel on Prevention of War Crimes organized by the Delegation of the UK to the OSCE PA, together with the Presidency of the PA. interior of a side event on war crimes organized by the UK delegation and the Presidency of the Assembly.

Elaborating upon longevity, therefore, does not only mean talking about problems and concerns for the future, it also means thinking positively, aspiring to a quality existence, in which we can develop passion and interests, enjoying time doing what makes us feel good, dedicating ourselves to the affections. This is essentially the main lesson that I have gained in these two years of work on and for elderly people, both at the level of the Italian intergroup on socio-economic perspectives of longevity and at the international level. We must project ourselves towards a “culture of longevity” and realize, by uniting all the forces available in politics and society, a real revolution that puts the person at the centre, starting with those who have often been forgotten and who, instead, can unleash in society a potential not yet fully expressed.

## 20 December 2021 - Web meeting with the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group for Longevity

Last December I held an online meeting with the UK All Party Parliamentary Group for Longevity.

In some OSCE participating States, including the United Kingdom and Italy, parliamentarians have established cross-party parliamentary groups to share considerations and discuss through a more sophisticated understanding the issues faced by the elderly population. All-party groups may also count on the contribution of individuals and organisations from outside Parliament in their administration and activities, creating avenues for raised awareness on the topic in domestic and international settings.



I believe this format constitutes a best practice which may be exported and replicated in the whole OSCE area because it strengthens the connection between civil society e parliament.

The virtual exchange with the UK All Party Parliamentary Group for Longevity allowed me to delve into the government's goal to increase healthy life expectancy by 5 years by 2035 (HLE+5), while also reducing the gap in life expectancy between the wealthiest and poorest groups. A topic extensively covered by the UK group in its February 2020 Health of the Nation report.

I was informed by the group that the Government's HLE+5 plan was one of the main drives for its establishment, also to trigger increased awareness on the relevance of the topic in the domestic and international context.

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the process of digitalisation in the UK and OSCE area, which may constitute a fundamental tool to achieving long-term goals such as, for example, the use of digital means to make health treatments more effective and to correct unhealthy dietary habits which increase the likelihood of requiring medical treatment. Further with regard to digital means, we highlighted the importance of improving the exchange of information between hospitals and care facilities for the elderly in order to speed up procedures and make assistance more effective.

The meeting gave the opportunity to debate on the fundamental role played by healthcare workers in elderly care, whose staff unfortunately in the OSCE region is under-sized. Hence, we must strive to allocate additional resources to these professions, also to make them more attractive.

In conclusion, we agreed that in addition to social, health and economic policies, we require a cultural transition; with institutions engaging in a didactic phase, operating additional efforts starting from the schools.

**17 January 2022 - Web meeting with the Rapporteur of the 2nd Committee of the OSCE PA, Gudrun Kugler**



The issues faced by the elderly population are a cross-dimensional topic with reverberations on ample areas of our oversight and mandate. I had the pleasure of holding a web meeting with my PA colleague, Rapporteur of the Second Committee (on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology & Environment), Gudrun Kugler (Austria) and wish to praise her for the sensitivity she has shown with regard to the issues faced by senior citizens.

We shared the concern about the birth rate and the crisis in the labour market. These processes lead, among other things, to the depopulation of rural areas, the closure of schools and the decline in the value of properties. To counter these phenomena, further investments are required for digitization, infrastructures and services. Measures are also needed to encourage intergenerational encounters, favoured for example by co-housing.

My colleague Gudrun Kugler highlighted that the Second Committee could well be called the “future” Committee as the issues addressed in this setting are fundamental for the future of the OSCE region. Further, I listened to a very interesting idea, given the high relevance of elderly issues, Gudrun outlined her proposal of establishing a Minister “for generations” / “for demographic development” / “for intergenerational cooperation” and / or an ad hoc department on these topics.

Following the meeting Dr. Kugler also forwarded me a thought-provoking document with regard to Austrian best practices concerning elderly issues. Most notably, I believe the provision of including students in municipal retirement homes, lowering their rent to 220€ in change of five hours a week of work as volunteers is a very intelligent proposal to facilitate intergenerational co-operation and encounters.

**21 February 2022 - Web meeting with the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations  
(BAGSO)**



*Andreas Kruse, Paola Taverna, Heidrun Mollenkopf, Ina Voelcker, Romy Reimer*

My meeting with Board Member of BAGSO Dr. Heidrun Mollenkopf, Chair of the German Ageing Report Commission Prof. Andreas Kruse, Project Manager at “Forum” Community Housing Federal Association Dr. Romy Reimer and Project Manager at the BAGSO Secretariat for International Policy on Ageing Mrs. Ina Voelcker allowed me to explore the German approach in addressing the challenges pertaining to the rapidly growing elderly population.

During the discussion Mrs. Voelcker informed me that BAGSO in its capacity as National Association of Senior Citizens’ Organisations serves as an umbrella Association of 120 civil society organizations that address the issues faced by senior citizens, its headquarters are located in Bonn.

Prof. Kruse elaborated upon the two pillars of longevity: the potential (individual and cultural heritage enshrined in senior age) and vulnerability (physical, cognitive and economic). He deems that these two pillars are linked and that science, society and political representatives have the task and responsibility to drive forward prevention measures, therapies and rehabilitation treatments to allow for the elderly to limit the consequences of pathologies and preserve autonomy. He further highlighted that the political environment is studying housing formulas and digital means to enable the elderly citizens to continue to be independent.

In this regard BAGSO, on the one hand, seeks strategies to integrate elderly citizens within the political debate so that they can give their contribution to the shaping of contexts together with the new generations, most notably at municipal and neighborhood level. On the other hand, displays strategies to motivate the elderly in continuing to give their contribution when in their retirement phase, to the political world, for example in the field of the inclusion of younger generations in the labour market.

With specific regard to the German Ageing Report Commission, in each legislature, reports by the Federal Government on the topic of seniority for the use of the entire Parliament address the issues faced by senior citizens, with important reverberations at the political level (inter alia, senile dementia, housing issues, digitalisation). The Commission includes reflections drawn from the world of science, civil society and politics which can be translated into legislative tools to improve the lives of the elderly population. BAGSO integrates reports by the German Ageing Report Commission by including contributions from civil society and subsequently distributes them among its members to collect the most valid project ideas.

Dr. Reimer provided me with considerations on the activities undertaken by “Forum” Community Housing Federal Association which was established thirty years ago and counts sixteen regional offices throughout the German territory. Its main focus is co-housing and more broadly innovative means of housing in line with worldwide demographic developments, which allow a broad spectrum of advantages for the elderly, including the contrast to loneliness.

Such demographic developments, and most notably the aging population require to reinforce home-care tools and ensure easy access to homes, contain the price of rentals and facilitate the inclusion of senior citizens in a context that gives space for their autonomy. Inter alia, the layout of student residencies (which feature large kitchens and meeting rooms) is replicated also for the elderly, in addition to the organization of sporting and cultural activities.

Co-housing is further linked to various services and job opportunities (for example outpatient practices within the apartment building, with a rehabilitative approach). Such projects are supported at federal, state and local level (for example in Hamburg 10-15% of real estate units are made available to co-housing; in Weimar there is an apartment building for disabled people inside former disused barracks).

Dr. Mollenkopf informed me that this year in Rome the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Ministerial Conference on Ageing will present the occasion to take stock of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) at the twentieth anniversary of its conception. The conference will feature the participation of all UNECE participating States and will be an opportunity to discuss at multilateral level issues connected to the aging population, as well as to gather ideas for the future. I had the honour to share remarks during the Conference which was held on 15-17 June and was glad to meet Dr. Mollenkopf on the occasion. Further, Dr. Mollenkopf informed me that BAGSO has consultative status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC UN). In the UN context, BAGSO is also very active with regard to the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWG): The German National Association of Senior Citizens’ Organisations participates in the discussion on how to better protect the rights of senior citizens around the world and supports the adoption of a UN Convention on the rights of the Elderly (in parallel to the approved UN Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and on the Rights of the Child).

**23 February 2022, Vienna - Meeting with the Commissioner for European Affairs of the Austrian Seniors' Association/ÖSB (Österreichischer Seniorenbund), Heinz Kurt Becker**

My meeting with Mr. Becker allowed me to explore and discuss the Austrian approach to elderly issues, with a specific focus on the role played by Senior Associations in the country.

From 1952 the two main Senior Associations are the "Association of Pensioners in Austria" of Social Democratic origin and the "Austrian Seniors' Association" of Christian Democratic origin.



The members of both Associations pay a fee of € 25 per year and are regulated at the level of the federal regions, an additional 1€ per member is provided by the State. This fee by members and funding by the State is used to finance the services and social activities provided by the Associations in its various activities, inter alia: In the field of sport, theatre performances, excursions and travel. These Associations count a high number of members: One million people. Given their political background, these Associations carry out social activities at the local level, while at the federal level they carry out political activities.

The peculiarity of the Austrian apparatus lies precisely in the fact that one section of the Associations is dedicated to services and the other to the political activity of the parties, with the provision of a state audit with regard to the allocation of the funding received. Further, the political sections of the main Senior Citizens' Associations are members of the Austrian Senior Citizens' Council, which is their umbrella organization and is responsible for the statutory representation of the interests of over 2.3 million senior citizens in Austria.

The importance of these Associations is striking in consideration that 40% of the voters of the two main parties ÖVP (Austrian People's Party) and SPÖ (Social Democratic Party of Austria) in the national and regional elections are of the third age (although these people represent 25% of society, they, however, represent 40% of the voters).

According to Mr. Becker, the results of such an important representation can also be taken into consideration in terms of pensions: Austrian pensioners enjoy an average pension that is 20% higher than that of German pensioners (An average of 1500 € per month).

Mr. Becker further elaborated upon the measures undertaken by the Austrian Seniors' Association to address the Covid-19 pandemic. Most notably, the virus triggered increased awareness of the importance of advancing digitalization efforts for the benefit of elderly citizens in a number of fields, including telemedicine, artificial intelligence and as a means to tackle loneliness. Also mobile and internet operators have sensed the opportunities represented by offering services to elderly citizens (silver economy), who are

the largest group of consumers and may count on a higher purchasing capacity compared to younger generations. At the moment, however, the pension system is challenged by the declining birth rate which, in the long term, might undermine its sustainability.

**24 February 2022, Vienna - Meeting with the Special Representative on Youth Engagement of the OSCE  
PA, Farah Karimi**

Given the close connection between issues concerning senior citizens and those concerning youth participation, I was glad to meet our Special Representative on Youth Engagement, Senator Farah Karimi (The Netherlands) in Vienna on the sidelines of our Winter Meeting.

Senator Karimi remarked that, inter alia, in our region in Italy, Spain and Germany demographic aging is more pronounced and that the elderly in those countries constitute an important percentage of the population. On the other hand, in Central Asia (for example in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan), the population below 25 years old constitutes more than 50% of the total population, hence, in these countries policies focus on offering youth job opportunities.

Special Representative Karimi further noted that a “youth-elderly” collaboration path could be built on the basis of “power sharing”. In fact, to date, the most important decisions, and therefore also those with the greatest impact on future generations, are generally taken by the population over 60.

Focussing on the domestic approach of the Netherlands, I was further informed that after examining the increase in life expectancy, the Netherlands have raised the retirement age to 67 years old. With regard to demographic balance, the Netherlands still features positive figures, hence the population trend is consequently with the + sign as well.

**28 February 2022 - Web meeting with the Minister Delegate for Personal Independence of the French Republic, Brigitte Bourguignon**

My meeting with Minister Delegate Brigitte Bourguignon allowed me to explore the French viewpoint and strategy to address elderly issues.

The principal objective of the Minister Delegate for Personal Independence is to change the approach to the elderly and their issues, within her mandate, the Minister Delegate is committed to finding avenues of autonomy to push further the phase of “dependence”. In this regard, the main focus of the French strategy is to intervene at all levels to allow people, if they so wish, to stay in their homes for as long as possible.

This consideration originates from the statistics which undoubtedly show us that we are moving toward a “longevity society” in Europe, hence, the French government is promoting an active and autonomous longevity based on aging at home.

To this end, Madam Bourguignon informed me that the French government is intervening in support of outworkers and “longevity professionals” to allow for their adequate formation and remuneration. Most notably, with the last two financial laws, important resources have been invested for these professions to ensure, inter alia, the provision of home services, apprenticeships for young people, integration contracts and training of nursing staff. Further, the French Government has intervened on residences for senior citizens to make them safer and more modern (for example the construction of “intermediate residences”, which are alternative to the EHPADs: “Residential establishments for dependent elderly people”; co-housing formulas; intergenerational housing and the modernization of the EHPADs, which were conceptualized twenty years ago) with a holistic approach, involving all actors, including family members of the elderly.

This attention translates in concrete terms into the recruitment of 40.000 professionals for the assistance to the elderly during the first phase of the Covid-19 pandemic; in the provision of 8.000 civic service jobs within the residences for the elderly borne by the State; in the provision of a specific diploma for elderly carers and further specialization opportunities in this field; in the establishment of the V branch of Social Security which aims to enable better coverage of benefits related to loss of autonomy and old age. Further, Minister Delegate Bourguignon noted that to encourage intergenerational encounters and solidarity, the EHPADs welcome nurseries and centres for the custody of children or nursery schools (the intergenerational encounters here materialize in various activities, for example in homework assistance).

With regard to the depopulation of small towns and medical desertification, the use of telemedicine has been enhanced, the operational range of midwives and physiotherapists has been extended, together with the provision of “Multidisciplinary healthcare facilities” as an alternative to hospitalization. To sustain elderly citizens in their daily activities, local public services “Maisons France Services” offer support to citizens in their administrative procedures (for example in the areas of taxation, pensions and bureaucratic procedures), especially in small towns.

In conclusion the French approach may also count on the support provided by the “Gérontopôles”, which represent the regional ecosystem supporting healthy, active and autonomous aging. Their contribution is



embodied in their capacity to provide innovation in the field of longevity, at research level, as well as in the field of technology.

**17 June 2022, Rome - United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Ministerial Conference on Ageing 2022: introductory remarks on the occasion of “the coordination of ageing policies in Italy” side-event**

The UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing was a precious opportunity to complete the fourth review and appraisal cycle (2018-2022) and mark the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS).

The event, which addressed the promotion of active and healthy ageing throughout life, stressed the importance of ensuring access to long-term care and support for carers and families and highlighted the significance of mainstreaming ageing to advance a society for all ages. It featured the high-level participation of governmental officials, parliamentarians, representatives of political parties, experts, representatives of the civil society and scientific research.

I had the honour to share remarks during the 17 June side-event titled: “The coordination of ageing policies in Italy” aimed at discussing current issues concerning the development of a national ageing strategy in Italy in the following years.

I took the opportunity to inform the participants of my engagement on these topics in my capacity as coordinator of an *all-party parliamentary group* titled “Longevity. Socio-economic perspectives” (Longevità. Prospettive socio-economiche) formed by senators, deputies and longevity experts in Italy as well as in my capacity as OSCE PA Special Representative on Elderly Issues at the multilateral level.

In my National capacity, the all-party parliamentary group first met on 23 March 2021 and has since held 12 meetings. At the centre of the meetings we have discussed various topics, to name the most significant: the development of a national program for the quality of life of the elderly; the promotion of active longevity; Silver economy and social and health assistance; the repopulation of rural areas through investments for digitization, infrastructure and services; co-housing to tackle the loneliness of senior citizens, encourage intergenerational encounters and reduce expenses.

My mandate within the OSCE PA allowed me to promote discussion in the Assembly on the key topic of longevity, confronting myself and stimulating my colleagues from other countries on these issues, trying to identify the best strategies.



**22 June 2022 - Web meeting with the Minister of Social Policy of Ukraine, Maryna Lazebna**

My meeting with Ukrainian Minister of Social Policy, Maryna Lazebna allowed me to share considerations on the conditions of elderly citizens in the context of the war in Ukraine. Since the start of the war, I have stressed that in such tragedies the ones suffering the most are innocent civilians, and amongst them, children, women and the elderly pay the highest price.



My exchange with Minister Lazebna focussed on opportunities to sustain elderly citizens affected by the war, most notably senior citizens who cannot escape easily and who are psychologically more vulnerable to emergency situations. Several residences for the elderly were evacuated due to Russian bombing. Some patients have been relocated thanks to the international aid network that was activated by the Minister of Social Policy.

Among the various damages caused to the structures, that to the IT network is particularly damaging because it prevents the regular provision of social services to elderly people.

**27-28 June 2022 - Official visit to Germany (Hanover and Hamburg)**

In Germany, I had the opportunity to enhance my understanding of strategies to address demographic aging and view German best practices.

My previous web meeting in February 2022 with representatives of the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO) was an excellent opportunity to explore the German viewpoint on the topic of Elderly Issues and, namely, the presentation by Dr. Romy Reimer on the activities undertaken by "Forum" Community Housing Federal Association provided the initial grounds for the planning of my visit.

My two-day visit to Germany focussed on the activities undertaken by the civil society in the country, characterized by a strong public/private partnership.

My first meeting took place in Hanover on 27 June with representatives of "Forum" Community Housing Federal Association (*FORUM Gemeinschaftliches Wohnen e.V. Bundesvereinigung*). Romy Reimer, Andrea Beerli, Stefanie Röder, Jana Ostermann and Chairman Josef Bura illustrated the role of "Forum" in relation to the implementation of projects promoted by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, by Land of Lower Saxony or at local level. "Forum"



*Hanover, 27 June 2022, Special Representative on Elderly Issues Paola Taverna visiting the Housing Cooperative "Self-Help Linden"*

also buildings in which elderly people and families with children live together, creating new so-called "elective family communities"

provides consultancy both directly and through public initiatives, such as conferences and through the production of information material.



*Hanover, 27 June 2022, Special Representative on Elderly Issues Paola Taverna visiting the premises of "FORUM" Community Housing Federal Association*

At the federal level, Forum is connected with other 26 entities and is part of the German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organizations (BAGSO) (*Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Seniorenorganisationen*). The main activity relates to model projects, based on public incentives for the construction of buildings intended for social purposes, and aimed at housing formulas for the elderly: buildings in which senior citizens and young people live together (intergenerational living), or only elderly people live (singles or couples). These housing units feature common areas in which the residents can socialize and may count on personal services (some buildings also feature outpatient treatment spaces for an initial therapeutic orientation). There are

(“Wahlverwandtschaften”). This made synergies possible, such as custody of minor children to elderly tenants by working mothers. In an experimental form, telemedicine initiatives are supporting traditional medical assistance.

Subsequently, I visited the housing co-operative Self-Help Linden (*Wohnen und Leben im Alter in Hannover-Mitte Wohnungsgenossenschaft Selbsthilfe Linden e.G.*) in Hanover/Ohestraße, guided by Klaas Leideck. These are several buildings acquired by two cooperatives, one made up of seven single people (or couples), the other of 14 single people (or couples). The allocation of the buildings took place on the basis of a notice from the Municipality for the recovery of public land with social projects (evaluated by a Commission). In the building complex, there was also a large common room and a kitchen where people, if they wish, can meet and carry out activities. Experience has shown that these communities are united by a strong feeling of solidarity. It could happen, for example, that elderly people, already retired, would look after the young children of a couple. Or, as had recently happened, a Ukrainian refugee who found hospitality with one of the families and received free German language lessons from a retired teacher.

The residents paid a certain amount of money to the cooperative with which the buildings were built. In return, they received substantial discounts on rent. The cost of the apartments was around € 5,500 per square metre, a slightly lower price than market prices. As for the cost of rent, they range between € 3 and € 10 per square metre per month. On the third floor the apartment of an elderly couple had been divided in



Hanover, 27 June 2022, Special Representative on Elderly Issues Paola Taverna visiting the Hanova “Living Plus” Self-Determined living project

such a way as to allow it to be divided into two distinct units in the event of the death of one of the two spouses.

My visit to Hanover was completed by a visit to Hanova Living Plus self-determined living (*WOHNEN PLUS Pfarrlandstraße Linden-Nord*) in Hanover/Pfarrlandstraße. The project was carried out by the company Hanova Srl, 90% owned by the Municipality of Hanover. Leading the presentation and the visit were Karsten Tech, from Hanova, and Claudia Fischer from Johanniter, a support organization. Hanova, with 350 employees, is responsible in the city of Hanover for around 15,000 accommodations. The structure consists of mainly small-sized

apartments and studios for single people of about 45 square metres, built without architectural barriers.

The facility also features a large common room and a kitchen (called “meeting coffee”). In this area it is possible to organize common musical and cultural initiatives open to all the residents of the neighborhood. There was also an empty apartment which owners or tenants could rely on in case of need (for example in

the event they had undergone surgery and needed a period of rehabilitation or had to host relatives or friends for short periods).

Home services have been organized around the people who live in the building (which beneficiaries must pay directly or through their health insurance).

The criterion of the applicant's income and age was followed for the allocation of housing.

A resident with 100% mobility impairments, Mr. Larry Golke, 55, a municipality employee, confirmed the benefits of living in the visited building.

On 28 June, I had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Hamburg Coordination Office for Residential Care Communities ("*STATTBAU HAMBURG Stadtentwicklungsgesellschaft mbH*" *Hamburger Koordinationsstelle für Wohn-Pflege-Gemeinschaften*), including with Mascha Stubenvoll. I was informed that since 2006 it has been carrying out consultancy activities for the City of Hamburg (and other requesting parties, sometimes including private citizens) for the promotion of new forms of housing: the most frequent formula being community housing and assistance. This approach envisages that senior citizens live together in the same condominium, each with their own autonomy, but with a common space for socialization, and facilitated access to care and assistance services.



*Hamburg, 28 June 2022, Special Representative on Elderly Issues Paola Taverna visiting residential care communities and barrier-free senior citizens' apartments managed by the "Hartwig Hesse Foundation" and the "Amalie Sieveking Foundation"*

Further, I visited adjacent projects in Hamburg/Alexanderstraße realized by the Hartwig Hesse Foundation Residential Care Community (*Hartwig Hesse Stiftung*) and by the Amalie Sieveking Foundation Barrier-free Senior Citizens' Apartments (*Amalie Sieveking-Stiftung*) where I met with Director of the Hartwig Hesse Foundation Maik Greb and Director of the Amalie Sieveking Foundation Annika Gürtler.

Both foundations have built apartments for self-sufficient or non-self-sufficient elderly people or people of less advanced age but with disabilities. The apartments are barrier-free. During the meetings, I was informed that both foundations can also provide temporary accommodation: this formula indicates the possibility for users to temporarily use an apartment if, for example, they are discharged from the hospital and need some recovery time before returning to their home or if relatives are temporarily unable to provide assistance.

In general terms, in the Land of Hamburg assistance insurance is mandatory ("*Pflegeversicherung*"). If necessary, this insurance can provide support for family caregivers. Nonetheless, the expense for a non-self-sufficient person who is in an accommodation facility for the elderly can reach € 5,000.00 per month. Another element to note is that in Germany the phenomenon of caregivers is not unknown.

Both structures have a large common room with a kitchen for social and cultural initiatives. Thanks to the law of the Land of Hamburg ("*Wohn- und Betreuungsqualitätsgesetz*"), residents can receive support for the payment of the rent (up to a maximum of € 4.40 per square metre per month for thirty years). Further, for the construction, the two foundations were able to benefit from advantageous mortgages and non-repayable grants from the Municipality. The two foundations owned the land on which the facilities were built, therefore they did not need to buy land from the Municipality, however, it's worth noting that in Hamburg, as well as in Hanover, the development of land owned by the municipality (which owns a large real estate, between 135 and 150 thousand homes) in recent years has taken place on the basis of a tender that privileged the social quality of the projects and not necessarily the maximization of the revenue.

Specifically, the project developed by the Hartwig Hesse Foundation hosts 180 people and consists of seven condominiums. It features a large common room with a kitchen in which social and cultural initiatives are organized (also with the support of the city). There is also a café open to the public.

The building complex of the foundation also features a 380 square metres apartment for people with senile dementia with 24-hour assistance.

On the other side of the road, in Alexanderstraße as well, I visited the apartments manufactured by the Amalie Sieveking Foundation. Around the original building, a complex consisting of several buildings has arisen, extensively renovated in 2021 also with the aim of creating real estate units without architectural barriers. At the time of my visit, the complex housed 120 people (destined to become 150 when the construction will be completely finished). The average age of the guests was between 65 and 69 years. The apartments, if intended for a single person, have a size of 50 square metres and if intended for a couple, 75 square metres. The cost of rents differs according to the size of the apartments. The Municipality financially supports people in difficulty (up to a certain maximum, linked to the applicant's income), by virtue of a municipal institution called "Housing voucher" ("*Wohnberechtigungsschein*"), which in case of particular urgency becomes "Urgency Voucher" ("*Dringlichkeitsschein*").

In addition to the rental contract, residents can enter into a "service contract" ("*Servicevertrag*"), partially subsidized by the Municipality, which allows them to obtain additional personal services.

Finally, I had the opportunity to visit the 424 square metre apartment intended for people with senile dementia, 10 rooms, each of 20 square metres, with a common room of 85 square metres equipped with a large kitchen, and three service people per shift during the day and one during the night. In front of the apartment there is a green area for guests, located in the courtyard closed by the foundation's buildings.

**3 July 2022, Birmingham - Dedicated Panel on Elderly Ukrainian refugees on the occasion of the UK Panel on Prevention of War Crimes Side Event during the 2-6 July 2022 OSCE PA Annual Session.**

During the OSCE PA Annual Session in Birmingham, I organized a Side Event on the situation of elderly people in Ukraine, which took place in the afternoon after an important Side Event on Prevention of War Crimes promoted by the UK Delegation to OSCE PA: the Side Event on elderly people in Ukraine was scheduled as a dedicated Panel in which the testimonies of elderly Ukrainians who had to leave the country due to the Russian aggression were heard.

With the great help of the City Council of Birmingham (a sanctuary city for refugees from all over the world), the Councillor for Social Inclusion Mr. John Cotton and the Commissioning Manager for Refugees and Migration Mrs. Marsela Hoxha, some elderly Ukrainian refugees hosted in Birmingham participated in the side event. Liudmyla Dvortsova from Kremenchuk, and the couple Larysa Antropova and Oleksandr Antropov



*Birmingham, 3 July 2022, Special Representative on Elderly Issues Paola Taverna with Ukrainian elderly citizens*

took the floor to tell about their experience of war and displacement.

Their concrete experience of war and of the effects of bombing on their lives as elderly people in Ukraine strongly impressed the OSCE Assembly parliamentarians. At the end of the Side Event the Ukrainian guests had a meeting with the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Margareta Cederfelt, and MP Yevheniia Kravchuk, member of the Ukrainian delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.



*Birmingham, 3 July 2022, Special Representative on Elderly Issues Paola Taverna speaking with President Margareta Cederfelt*