

# Rights of older persons during pandemic

## Polish NHRI's activities and lessons

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# Activities of Polish Ombudsman Office

Helpline

Direct contact with care facilities within OPCAT mechanism

On-line consultations with experts, care providers, civil society representatives

Set of recommendations regarding the situation of older persons during pandemic – based on experts opinions

Letters to the government – request for a meeting

Direct co-operation with civil society – creating networks of support

Webinars and on-line meetings with other stakeholders

Mainstreaming Ageing – intersectionality, discrimination etc.

Translating @HelpAge flyer on abuse of older persons into Polish

# Lessons

- 1. Right to social inclusion** – some residents in care facilities say they feel imprisoned.

Lack of procedures and lack of special protective zones at the gates which would allow the residents, staff, nurses and doctors to come in and come out in a safe manner every day.

Often the staff is locked down with inhabitants for about two weeks.

- 2. Right to decide about your own life**

In co-operation with civil society and public institutions a network of local coordinators and supporters embracing 300 care facilities and 300 hospitals has been created. It focuses on delivering substantial support in regard of pandemic. This initiative is now functioning without further support of NHRI, which is an advantage. The weakness is lack of consulting older persons themselves on their needs or the ways they wish to receive support.

## The challenges for NHRIs during pandemic:

- To reach out to older persons themselves
- some of our activities are fragmented, not consisted with each other
- To implement an inner communication within the NHRI on the human rights based approach towards older persons
- the work on some rights of older persons seems to be frozen during pandemic

## Recommendations:

**Build an inner network within an NHRI** regarding the rights of older persons

**Lead inner and external consultations** on various issues, including questionnaires addressed to care facilities or local governments assuring the human rights based approach and consistency of the activities.

**Make visible the rights of older persons** among wide range of stakeholders, actively looking for partners and new networks – also by showing data and translating the human rights language by giving examples.

Connect the discussed issues with the on-going work on the  
**Convention on the rights of older persons**

**Advocate for having the lessons taken into account by the State**  
Like visibility of the needs of older persons or new ways of coordination developed during pandemic. The lessons should contribute in building a stable systemic support for older persons.