Thank you, Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the EU and its Member States I would like to thank you, the Chair, the Bureau, the Secretariat and the various moderators and panellists for a productive session with informative contributions from various countries and regions. I would also like to thank the Independent Expert, delegates and civil society representatives for their constructive interventions. The involvement of civil society and older persons themselves is essential to inform our discussions.

The seventh meeting of the open-ended Working Group on Ageing has allowed us to continue to pursue our efforts to strengthen the protection of the human rights of older persons. The EU and its Member States have once again enthusiastically engaged in these discussions, during the general debate, the panel discussions, the interactive dialogues and the side-events.

Mr. Chair,

The discussions, including the contributions of the Independent Expert and civil society, have highlighted some very worrying shortcomings when it comes to the enjoyment of human rights by older persons, such as age-related discrimination, violence and abuse against older persons, and difficulties accessing healthcare, palliative care, and other essential services. And we have heard about important national, regional and international initiatives to address these and other shortcomings. Having listened to the
many interventions during the past days, we believe that there is general agreement on the need for further efforts to enhance the protection of the human rights of older persons, but we continue to debate the best way forward.

The EU remains convinced that much more can be achieved through the implementation of the existing human rights framework and through combating age discrimination. As we have heard over the past few days, we have an international normative framework in place which applies equally to older persons, but it is not being properly or sufficiently implemented to address the situation of older persons in any region of the world. We must step up our efforts to raise awareness for the application of these existing norms in relation to older persons. We must also examine how international human rights instruments can be applied more consistently and effectively to the situation of older persons.

At this point, the EU considers that the next step should be to focus on what concrete measures can be undertaken to improve the situation of older persons. Building on the valuable work of the Independent Expert, the Working Group should identify and analyse the key problems and issues. Once this work has been completed, we should consider what steps should be taken towards addressing problems that have been identified, potentially including recommendations for new standard setting.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.