

First Ministerial Roundtable

Ensuring access to long-term care and support for carers and families

Friday 17 June 2022

11:30-13:00

Population ageing is a fact, and also in Greece has serious social and economic implications, increasing the demand for long-term care services.

Our role as politicians is to ensure with specific policies the well being of our oldest co citizens and their carers and I am sure that leaving from this conference we will have this role more strongly in our mind and in our heart as it was mentioned yesterday.

Greece has long-established public systems for providing long-term care to the elderly.

As regards policies which relate to the three priority goals agreed in 2017 in Lisbon, Greece provides for both care services and income support programs

But our focus now is to promote autonomy and independent living. To this end, as highlighted in the 2021 European Union Long Term Care Reports, **home care** is the preferred type of care and together with the **community care**, they should be prioritized over institutional care. Besides, it is considered more cost effective compared to institutional care.

In order to promote home care and to enhance autonomy and independent living, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs developed a project to reform the social care services for the elderly in Greece, with the support of the European Commission and the expertise of the World Bank.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed us, that governments should always be on guard to take immediate actions during crises. For

the Greek government, the protection of the elderly was first priority;

- they were vaccinated first,
- we hired more personnel in the public institutions and took strong measures to prohibit visits in the nursing homes.

Measures that had positive results in the protection of human lives.

As regards the **protection of older persons from abuse**, after legislation drafted last October, all institutions hosting seniors have to appoint a person responsible for the protection of the elderly against abuse and to examine every complaint.

Currently we are planning the development of a national strategy for active and healthy ageing.

In addition, **in order to safeguard ageing with dignity we have planned the following measures :**

- digital training of seniors to improve autonomy and social inclusion,
- training of staff working with the elderly,
- psychosocial support of older persons,
- prevention of social exclusion of the elderly, especially of those who face multiple discrimination.

Allow me to take things a step further and say that for us it is essential to protect and fulfil enjoyment of human rights for older persons irrespective of their gender or the special group that they may belong. We believe that diversity of the older persons must be reflected in the actions taken.

For example, as regards the elderly LGBTQI citizens measures should be taken to promote their inclusiveness, visibility and

their equal access to health, long-term care services, employment, social and economic life in general.

We should face the issue of removing stereotypes and discrimination against the elderly in a coherent and holistic way.