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 fruitful session with enlightening exchanges of views from various countries and regions. I would also like to thank delegates and civil society representatives for their thoughtful and informative inputs. The involvement of civil society and older persons themselves is crucial to inform our continued discussions.

The sixth meeting of the open-ended Working Group on Ageing has allowed us to continue our exchanges of best practices and ideas of how best to address the current social and demographic challenges affecting persons at all stages of life, and how to strengthen the enjoyment of human rights by older persons. The EU and its member States have been active participants in these discussions. We have presented and explained our engagement to ensure the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons in the general debate and during the panel discussions.

Mr. Chair,

The discussions have also highlighted some serious shortcomings that do exist when it comes to the enjoyment of human rights by older persons. Having listened to the many interventions during the past days, our understanding is that there is broad agreement not only on the overall analysis of the situation of older persons, but also with regard to the pressing need for improvement. However, we continue to debate the best way ahead. The EU remains sceptical that protection gaps are of a normative nature and recalls its position that more can be achieved through the implementation of the existing Human Rights framework that includes the human rights of older persons and through combating age discrimination. The current international framework addresses many of these issues in a comprehensive manner, namely in the areas of
health, social security, violence and discrimination - for example, by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities or the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women.

Although we do have an international normative framework in place which applies equally to older persons, it is not being properly or sufficiently implemented to address the situation of older persons in any region of the world. There is a need to accelerate our efforts to raise awareness for the application of these existing norms in relation to older persons and how laws and policies affecting older persons can be fully informed by international human rights instruments.

Nevertheless, the EU considers that there are concrete measures that can be taken in order to raise awareness and to better promote existing rights:

- The Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons can continue to contribute in a crucial manner to more systematically assess the implementation of existing international instruments, pointing to implementation gaps and highlighting best practices, as well as raising awareness.

- In order to mainstream human rights through the work of the UN, other UN human rights mandate holders, as well as the treaty bodies could also be encouraged to devote attention to the rights of older persons within their mandates, while fully respecting their independence and integrity. Also the UPR could be used to better highlight the issue on the context of an overall assessment of each country. Moreover, UN agencies, many of which apply a human rights approach to their work already, could mainstream the rights of older persons into their strategic plans.

- A comprehensive compilation which would assemble the existing standards in one document would be a concrete and swift way of improving the accessibility of the existing norms.

This short enumeration shows that there are concrete measures that are ready to be taken immediately in order to improve the enjoyment of human rights by older persons without delay. Let us act together to address these pressing issues now.

I thank you, Mr. Chair