

Panelists

International Expert-Conference on Human Rights of Older Persons – ICHRoP 2023

29th November – 1st December 2023, Vienna

Speakers and Panelists – November 30th

Informal Session on the Conference Declaration and HROP

■ Matthias von Schwanenflügel

Fellow of the German Institute for Human Rights e.V. and the Institute for the European Healthcare and Social Economy Sectors | Professor at the University of Bremen

Matthias von Schwanenflügel is a German lawyer and civil servant who has been a Fellow of the German Institute for Human Rights e.V. and the Institute for the European Healthcare and Social Economy Sectors since March 2023. He is also an honorary professor at the University of Bremen and a lecturer at the University of Münster.

He studied law and economics at the University of Bremen, where he obtained his doctorate in law in 1991. He worked as a research assistant at the University of Bremen and as an EU Commission official before moving to the Federal Ministry of Health in 1991. There he worked in various departments and management areas, including as Head of Division for Medical Devices Law, Commissioner for the New Federal States, Deputy Head of the Minister's Office and Head of the Sub-Departments for Care Security, Budget, Law and Telematics. He was also the official data protection officer and head of the sub-department for pharmaceuticals and biotechnology.

In May 2014, he moved to the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, where he was responsible for demographic change, older people, welfare and sustainability as Ministerial Director and Head of Department 3 until November 2022. He was also the Ministry's Sustainability Officer. From January to May 2011, he was a consultant and fellow at the US Department of Health and Human Services in Washington DC. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Institute for the Promotion of Social Innovation in Cologne.

Opening Session

■ Edeltraud Glettler

Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection

Edeltraud Glettler has been Head of Section V - European, International and Social Policy Issues at the Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs since July 2007. She is responsible for various subject areas such as EU matters, minimum income, ESF+ and other social policy issues.

From 1992 to 1995 she was Federal Women's Secretary of the Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB) and a member of the Women's Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation. She then moved to the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, where she worked on equal opportunities and European and international policy. She was also involved in the organisation of the first Austrian EU Council Presidency. In 1999, she took over the management of the European and International Affairs Group at the Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations. In addition to her work as Head of Section in the Ministry of Social Affairs, she heads the Social Affairs Working Group of the Joint Commission Russian Federation/Austria and is a member of the Presidium of the Leadership Forum Innovative Administration.

■ Volker Türk

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Volker Türk has served as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights since 17 October 2022. His work focuses on universal human rights, especially for refugees and stateless persons.

Previously, he was the Under-Secretary-General for Policy in the Executive Office of the United Nations Secretary-General. In this role, he coordinated global policy work and UN system-wide coordination on human rights and common challenges. He also worked as the Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination in the same office from 2019 to 2021.

From 2015 to 2019, he was the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection in UNHCR. He contributed to the development of the Global Compact on Refugees.

He has held other positions in UNHCR headquarters and in the field. He holds a doctorate in international law from the University of Vienna and a Master of Laws degree from the University of Linz, Austria. He has published on international refugee law and human rights law. He is fluent in English and French and has some knowledge of Spanish.

Keynotes

■ Claudia Mahler

United Nations Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of all Human Rights by Older Persons

Claudia Mahler assumed her role as Independent Expert in May 2020. She is a senior researcher in the field of economic, social and cultural rights for the German Institute for Human Rights since 2010. She was also a visiting professor at the Alice Salomon Hochschule in 2020-2021.

From 2001 to 2009, Ms. Mahler conducted research at the Human Rights Centre of the University of Potsdam where her main fields were in human rights education, minority rights and the law of asylum. In 2000, she was appointed as Vice President of the Human Rights Commission for Tyrol and Vorarlberg.

She has also worked as a lecturer in the field of human rights law and as a consultant to OHCHR in Geneva. From 1997-2001, she held the position of an assistant at the Leopold-Franzens-University Innsbruck, Austria in the field of Criminal Law and Criminal Procedures. Ms. Mahler received her doctoral degree in 2000.

■ **María del Carmen Squeff**

Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations

María del Carmen Squeff is the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations.

Ambassador Squeff is a career diplomatic, graduated from the Foreign Service Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Argentina in 1993. Later, she served at the Undersecretary of Economic Integration of this Ministry. She was appointed to the Argentina Embassy to the European Union. After that, she was Chargé d'Affaires to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). In 2008, she led the reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). She was Undersecretary of Foreign Policy (2011 to 2013), Ambassador of Argentina to France (2013–2016), seconded to the Organization of American States (OAS) Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (2016-2017), Ambassador of Argentina to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2018–2019), and Undersecretary of MERCOSUR and International Economic Negotiations (December 2019 to July 2020). Since August 2020, she has been the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations.

Ambassador Squeff has a master's degree in International Politics from the Faculté des Sciences Sociales, Politiques et Economiques, Université Libre de Bruxelles, and a degree in Political Science from the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations of the National University of Rosario.

Panel 1 - Panel on the Rights, Challenges, and Solutions for Older Persons

■ Andrew Byrnes

Emeritus Professor of International Law and Human Rights at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Sydney, Australia

Andrew Byrnes is Emeritus Professor of International Law and Human Rights at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Sydney, Australia. He was a professor of law at the Australian National University and the University of Hong Kong before joining UNSW, where he became a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and the Australian Academy of Law. He chaired the Australian Human Rights Centre and led the Australian and New Zealand Society of International Law as President.

His publications cover various human rights topics, such as women's rights, older persons' rights, disability rights, national human rights institutions, and economic and social rights. He has also provided advice to many organisations, including the Australian Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, the Law Council of Australia, the Seniors Rights Service (NSW), and the International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia-Pacific.

He participated in the drafting of international human rights instruments, such as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In addition, he has worked as a consultant to the United Nations and the Asian Development Bank on human rights issues, especially on older persons and disability rights.

■ Anna Chabiera

Senior Specialist, Department of Equal Treatment

Anna Chabiera is a sociologist and a senior specialist in the Department of Equal Treatment in the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in Warsaw (a Polish National Human Rights Institution), where since 2011 she organizes social research on discrimination based on grounds of gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity and beliefs. Her tasks enclose also monitoring the state's policy on ageing and the works of UN Open-ended Working Group on Ageing.

She is a member of the group of experts on the rights of older persons advising the Polish Commissioner on older persons issues. She also represents European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) in the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) Working Group on Ageing and Human Rights of Older Persons in a role of the Vice-Chair of this Working Group.

■ **Bridget Sleep**

Senior Researcher, Rights of Older People

Bridget Sleep is a senior researcher on the rights of older people at Human Rights Watch.

Previously, she was a senior rights policy adviser at HelpAge International where she led the organization's research and advocacy on the rights of older people at the UN and national levels, including on ageism and age discrimination, autonomy and independence, and the rights of older people in responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. She also previously worked as a research manager at the University of Bath and on HIV and AIDS related projects at International Family Health and the Panos Institute.

Ms. Sleep holds an honors degree in modern world history from the University of Bristol and a master's in Securing and Understanding Human Rights from the University of London. She has lived and worked in Mozambique, Egypt, and Jordan.

■ **Emem Omokaro**

Government Official I Director General of the National Senior Citizens Centre (NSCC) | Executive Director of the Dave Omokaro Foundation (DOF)

Emem Omokaro, Ph.D. in Development Sociology from the University of Calabar, Nigeria, is the Executive Director of the Dave Omokaro Foundation (DOF). Her award-winning dissertation focused on the quality of care for Nigeria's elderly. Emem is a policy analyst with a certificate in Social Gerontology from UN-Malta. She has played a key role in advancing national action on aging through strategic platforms and mechanisms in Nigeria. Emem's proactive engagements have strengthened alliances, boosted institutional capacity, and fueled advocacy efforts. She pioneered Gerontology studies in 11 Nigerian universities as a LEADS Scholar to the National Universities Commission. Emem is associated with various organizations including INIA, GAROP, ASARD, and GERAN. She is a recipient of multiple awards, including the Exxon Mobil Award and the University of Calabar Foundation Scholarship Award. Emem is also a published poet and has contributed significantly to scholarly discourse on aging and development in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa.

■ Sabine Springer

Project manager for the topic of ageing in digital societies in the Equality, Roma and Social Rights Department

Sabine Springer is a demographer and statistician managing the "Ageing in digital societies" project in the Equality, Roma and Social Rights Unit of the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

After her studies in Germany and France, she gained international experience working with UNFPA in Nigeria and as a junior professional officer in Kenya (UN-HABITAT), proposing a global definition of homelessness.

Moving to Paris to finalise her PhD at the National Institute for Demographic Studies (INED), Sabine participated in two European projects on the living conditions of older persons: FELICIE (Future Elderly Living Conditions in Europe) and MAGGIE (MAGGIE - Major Ageing and Gender Issues in Europe).

Since 2010, she has been working for FRA and involved in different projects, e.g. on Fundamental Rights, Roma, LGBTI, the rights of children, youth and older persons.

■ Natasa Todorovic

Psychologist and Expert Associate of the Red Cross Serbia

Natasa Todorovic graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Psychology of the Belgrade University and is a Master of Public Health and current PhD candidate at the Medical School of the Belgrade University. Her primary work over the past two decades has focused on the effects of demographic ageing, in particular on elder abuse and different aspects of care (long-term care systems, informal caregivers). She has coordinated several regional EU-supported projects focusing on these themes and is an active researcher looking into different ageing-related topics such as violence against older persons and older women, accessibility of long-term care etc.

She is active in advocacy for improved quality of life of older persons at global, regional and national level through her work in the Red Cross of Serbia, as well as through several international platforms. She is the regional representative for Europe of the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), the President of the Gerontological society of Serbia, a member of GAROP Steering Group and was a member of the HelpAge International network governance task force advising the HAI governing board.

In 2018 she was awarded the International Rosalie S. Wolf Award in Elder Abuse Prevention, by INPEA. The same year she was awarded a "Hrast" award for supporting lifelong learning and active ageing by the Gerontological Centre Belgrade. She is a co-author of multiple scientific papers and conference proceedings as well as co-author of 20 publications.

■ Madeleine Müller

Researcher and Consultant at the Research Institute - Digital Human Rights Center

Madeleine Müller, BA, MU is a researcher and consultant at the Research Institute - Digital Human Rights Center. She studied Law and Philosophy at the University of Vienna and completed a Master's degree in Political Philosophy at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona. As part of her international education, she focused on current issues and challenges in the field of fundamental and human rights, which enabled her to develop interdisciplinary expertise in this field of research. Her primary research interest lies at the intersection of law and the humanities.

■ Pradeep Wagle

Head of the Department for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, OHCHR, Geneva

Pradeep Wagle joined the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Section (ESCR Section) with OHCHR Geneva in April 2022. Before joining the ESCR Section, he was the Country Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Cambodia. Pradeep was with the Asia Pacific Section of OHCHR in various capacities including as the Senior Human Rights Officer of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, Legal Officer (Democratic People's Republic of Korea accountability project) and Desk Officer for Myanmar and Malaysia. His previous assignments include OHCHR Rule of Law and Democracy Section, Transitional Justice Advisor in OHCHR Sri Lanka, Head of the Office in the OHCHR Gaza, Team Leader, UNAMA Regional Office in Kandahar, Coordinator of Transitional Justice and Administration of Justice unit in the UNAMID and Human Rights Officer with the United Nations Mission in Sudan. Between 2003 to 2005 he worked as a lawyer in Nepal as well as in various other capacities with local and international human rights organizations and academic institutions in Nepal and South Asia. Between 1996-2002 he served the Government of Nepal as a public prosecutor. He holds a bachelor's degree in law (LLB) and Master's (LLM) degrees from Tribhuvan University Nepal and from the University of Hong Kong.

Speakers and Panelists – December 1st

Opening

■ Johannes Rauch

Federal Minister of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection

Johannes Rauch has been the Federal Minister of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of the Republic of Austria since March 2022. After training as a bank clerk and a social worker, he worked in various social fields before devoting himself to politics full-time.

He joined the Greens in 1985 and was their regional spokesman in Vorarlberg from 1997 to 2021. He was a member of the state parliament from 2000 to 2014 and a state councillor for environmental protection and public transport from 2014 to 2022. In this role, he advocated for the expansion of public transport, the promotion of renewable energies and climate protection.

As Federal Minister, he is responsible for the areas of social affairs, health, care and consumer protection. A key part of his agenda is the older generation, which makes up an important part of Austrian society. He is convinced that the dignity and human rights of older people must be respected and promoted.

Panel 2 – Panel on Aging in the Digital Age: Rights, Realities and Responsibilities

■ Alexandre da Silva

National Secretary for the Human Rights of Older People - MDHC | Specialist in Ageing | Researcher | PhD in Public Health

Alexandre da Silva is a gerontologist and a professor at the Federal University of São Paulo, Brazil. He has a PhD in gerontology from the same university and a postdoctoral degree in gerontology from the University of Barcelona, Spain. He is the coordinator of the Center for Studies and Research on Aging (NEPE) and the editor-in-chief of the Brazilian Journal of Gerontology.

Alexandre da Silva has more than 20 years of experience in the field of gerontology, with a focus on the human rights of older persons. He has participated in several national and international projects and networks on aging, such as the Latin American Network of Gerontology (RELAGE), the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG), and the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA).

Alexandre da Silva is also a social activist and a consultant for various organizations and institutions that work with older persons. He is the president of the Brazilian Society of Gerontology and Geriatrics (SBGG) and a member of the National Council of the Rights of the Elderly (CNDI). He is the author of several books and articles on aging, human rights, and public policies.

■ Alexei Buzu

Minister of Labor and Social Protection

Alexei Buzu is the Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova since 2023. He has a degree in Economics and Finance from the Academy of Economic Studies. He is also the director of the Center for Partnership for Development, a non-governmental organization that promotes social justice and human rights.

Buzu has extensive experience as a consultant for various international organizations, such as Crisis Management Initiative Finland, Global Gender Help Desk, Council of Europe, World Bank, UN agencies, European Union, GIZ, Swiss Cooperation Office, and others. He has conducted evaluations, studies, and analyses on topics such as gender equality, youth development, demographic security, local governance, free trade, and human rights.

Buzu has also supported the development of strategic documents and policies for the Moldovan government and civil society organizations. He has contributed to the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030, the Association Agreement with the EU, and the National Strategy for Ensuring Equality between Women and Men in Moldova. He has also provided technical assistance and capacity building for various stakeholders on gender mainstreaming, advocacy, and participatory planning.

■ Simon Maljevac

Minister of Solidarity-Based Future

Simon Maljevac graduated from the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana in 2012 and obtained a degree in sociology.

During his studies and afterwards, he did voluntary and contract work for the communications engineering agency Directa and the Legebitra Information Centre Society, which he headed from 2007 to 2017. During his leadership, the society grew into the largest LGBT NGO in Slovenia, and he led numerous national and international projects, including a European Commission development project in Kosovo. He worked with the Ministry of Health, The Peace Institute, and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities on research, prevention and activism projects. During this period, he was also Editor-in-Chief of the magazine Narobe.

In 2006, he became Slovenia's representative in the EU Network group of the ILGA Europe international organisation, and from 2007 to 2009 he was President of the IGLYO international youth organisation. From 2017 to 2018, he was head of the monitoring, awareness-raising and prevention department at the Advocate of the Principle of Equality. Since 2018, he has been Secretary-General of the political party The Left (Levica).

Alongside his work in the NGO sector, he has also worked in academia. He has co-authored several scientific articles in domestic and foreign scientific journals and published a scientific monograph, *Obrazi homofobije* (Faces of Homophobia).

From May 2022 to January 2023, he served as State Secretary responsible for equal opportunities, family, disabled persons, older people and deinstitutionalisation at the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Slovenia. In January 2023, he was appointed as Minister of Solidarity-Based Future, responsible for long-term care, public housing policy and economic democracy.

■ Jorge Aranda

Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal at the United Nations

Jorge Aranda has been a Portuguese diplomat since 1998. He is currently the Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal at the UN in New York. Previously he was Security Policy Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Lisbon. He had been posted before to Copenhagen, Berlin, Warsaw, Helsinki and NATO in Brussels. He was appointed Diplomatic Advisor to the Prime Minister, to the Secretary of State for European Affairs and to the Secretary of State for National Defence in different Portuguese Governments.

■ Tatevik Stepanyan

Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Armenia

Stepanyan is the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the RA and heads the Equal Opportunities Department. This department comprises four areas that deal with the rights and needs of children, people with disabilities, the elderly and women. She has been in this position since 2020.

Ms Stepanyan has extensive training and experience in languages, education, social work and entrepreneurship. She studied English and German at Yerevan State Linguistic University according to V. Brusov and obtained online certificates in the areas of reading and writing difficulties and autism spectrum disorders. She has participated in women's leadership, mental health and social innovation programmes. She speaks three languages: English, Russian and German.

Ms Stepanyan was General Manager at "EVANT Group" LLC, an event management and marketing company, from 2004 to 2020. She also founded and managed the social NGO "Step Forward", which works for the integration of people with disabilities. She is a member of the Public Council of the Minister of Health and the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs. She was also a member of the Impact Hub Yerevan as part of the "Zartir Fellowship".

■ Wang Shaozhong

Vice President of China National Committee on Ageing (CNCA)

Wang Shaozhong has worked as the Vice President of China National Committee on Ageing (CNCA) since 2015, in charge of protecting older persons' legitimate rights and interests. He worked in the Department of Civil Organization Management, the Bureau of Civil Organizations, and the General Office within the Ministry of Civil Affairs from 1988 to 2000. He also worked on ageing policy research from 2000 to 2006 at CNCA. Mr. Wang also took several posts from 2006 to 2015, at the Secretariat of China National Working Commission on Ageing, working on liaison among CNWCA ministerial members, nationwide ageing program development and human resources within CNCA. Mr. Wang finished his bachelor's degree in Renmin University of China, majoring in history.