

# The Journey Starts Here



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The countdown to **Ageing in common** has ended and the journey has now begun with Day 1 of the **NCF & CommonAge Ageing in Common Care Conference**.

‘Let us take this movement forward together and let us get our voices heard.’ Inspiring words to get us all thinking about how we take forward an understanding of ageing so that society, policy makers, communities and in our own thinking. The figures speak for themselves, ageing is one of the most significant challenges that the globe is facing – Older persons will outnumber children by 2030, and youths will be outnumbered by 2050.

Our first speaker at Ageing in Common was **Anthony Agius Decelis**, the Junior Minister for Persons with Disability & Active Ageing. He talked about the Maltese national Strategic Policy for Active Ageing – premised upon three themes.

- Active participation in the labour market
- Social Participation in the community
- Independent living

This recognised that in order for this to be achieved there are such significant economic and societal changes that need to happen. This includes reform of health, welfare and reform across all of society. The Maltese government want to ensure that no older person, irrespective of his or her physical disabilities will be left behind.

This very strength based agenda was mirrored in the language of the other speakers this morning, who have talked in diverse ways around this common theme that we must between us challenge the notion that older people have nothing to contribute.

Dr Charles Alessi shared the importance of flexible approaches to employment – reminding of the importance of employment and **productive lifestyles** in sustaining a positive approach to ageing. As part of a vibrant and positive discussion following his presentation, key issues around visibility of older people, shifting the narrative of ageing and importantly supporting people to make key decisions about their own health are the key components of changing our approach to ageing.

Finally we heard from Francis Njuakom Nchii from Cameroon – focusing on the importance of connection. He spoke of his connection with CommonAge as part of the **power of transformation – transforming services, transforming connections and critically transforming understanding of ageing**.

Positive messages around empowering older people were central too, and the minister from Malta put out a challenge that all care provision should incorporate representative bodies that involved older people in the running of the settings. This all happened in the first 90 minutes of the conference – the messages are clear – there is a groundswell of action that needs to happen to get ageing understood, prioritised and celebrated. As one of the speakers said, ageing is not about decline – it should be looked at as a continuous growth and new opportunities. The Ageing journey starts here....

Follow the hashtags throughout the three days to keep up-to-date with the latest news and discussions coming out of Ageing in Common

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