



April 2022 / Volume 4

EUROAGEISM

NEWSLETTER

IN THIS VOLUME

The last general EuroAgeism meeting

- News
- Coordinator's words
- Interactive reflections
- Measuring the impact of the project
- Future collaborations
- Compiling the final report
- Closing section



NEWS

The EuroAgeism programme officially ended on October 31st 2021, but owing to the delays caused by the global pandemic, the programme was granted 6 months extension.

With a closing date of April 30th 2022, it seemed fitting to have a final evaluative and reflective meeting. The Early Stage Researchers (ESRs) and supervisors agreed on a date for March 21st and 22nd and the meeting was designed to be hybrid to be as inclusive as possible.

The event took place in Barcelona and this newsletter reports on the discussions and activities that took place over the 2 days. The editors of this newsletter, Professor Angela Kydd (mentor) and Federica Previtali (ESR) have asked all ESRs in attendance at the event to volunteer to take notes on one of the sessions and prepare a few paragraphs for this newsletter.

We are very grateful to all of our contributors, and we know that this newsletter will be a final reminder of the journey we have all been on.

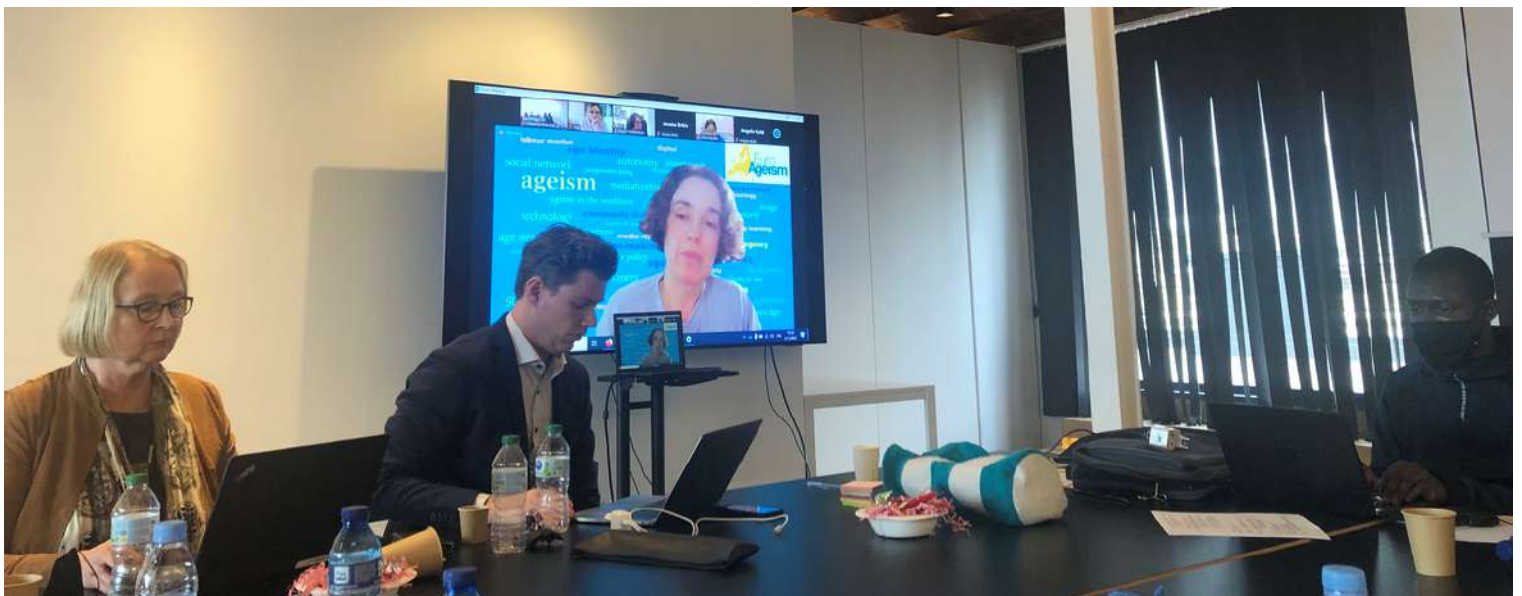
DAY 1: MARCH 21ST

The first day of the event consisted of four main topics; an opening speech from the programme lead, interactive reflections, a working lunch and a discussion on the final report.

COORDINATOR'S WORDS

Written by Liat Ayalon

This was a stirring and emotional speech by the programme lead, **Professor Liat Ayalon**. In this **farewell speech**, she gave seven lifestyle recommendations – which every aspiring academic and/or researcher would do well to adhere to.



The title of this document that I prepared in your honour is called **goodbye**. I am awfully sorry to say goodbye without being able to actually see your eyes, hug you, and properly send you on your way. But- this too is a sign of unprecedented times. This would not have happened to me three years ago.

In any case, today **we are concluding a little over four years for us** mentors and about three and a half years for you, students. How can I summarize this experience in 10 minutes? I don't think I can. We have a long report to do so, so I am not worried- all your achievements and joint activities will be perfectly presented and described in this report.

Nonetheless, a few things will be missing from the report.

For me, a huge sign of the success of the program is the meeting that is taking place in Spain right now. When we started, I still remember the first meeting in Brussels, when you were all fresh and new to the program, to international meetings and the topic of ageism. I believe that *now, ageism is no longer a foreign term, international travels and meetings have become the norm, and you are the ones who worked to organize this meeting rather than us. It is now your turn to take the lead and I think you are all ready for this.*

So- before we all go each his or her way, I have several recommendations that I hope will help you in your future endeavour:



1. Take care of yourself.

I know your mom has been saying this too. And- I know it is not new in any shape or form, but **if you do not take care of yourself, no one else will do this for you.** We are all in the field of ageing. This means we all know ageing does not start at 60, 65 or even at 80. Ageing **starts at birth or even before**- we just use different terms to acknowledge it over the life course

If you don't take care of yourself now, things will accumulate and at some point, the rest of my recommendations will not matter- so please- prioritize your health and wellbeing from now on- and hopefully even before.

2. Take care of your family and try to prioritize your family affairs when needed

This is why I am not here with you even though I was hoping to be with you. Life family balance usually turns into life family imbalance. It means that you always feel guilty-guilty for not doing enough at work, guilty for not being enough with your family. Guilt is a given. But- you have to always remember your priorities and as driven or ambitious you might be, **at the end of the day, you don't want to go to bed with your published articles or research grants.** It is easier said than done- but I think this must be stated here- also for me to hear and internalize slowly.

3. *Be nice*

to your colleagues- be even nicer to your students or employees underneath you.

Carma is everywhere.

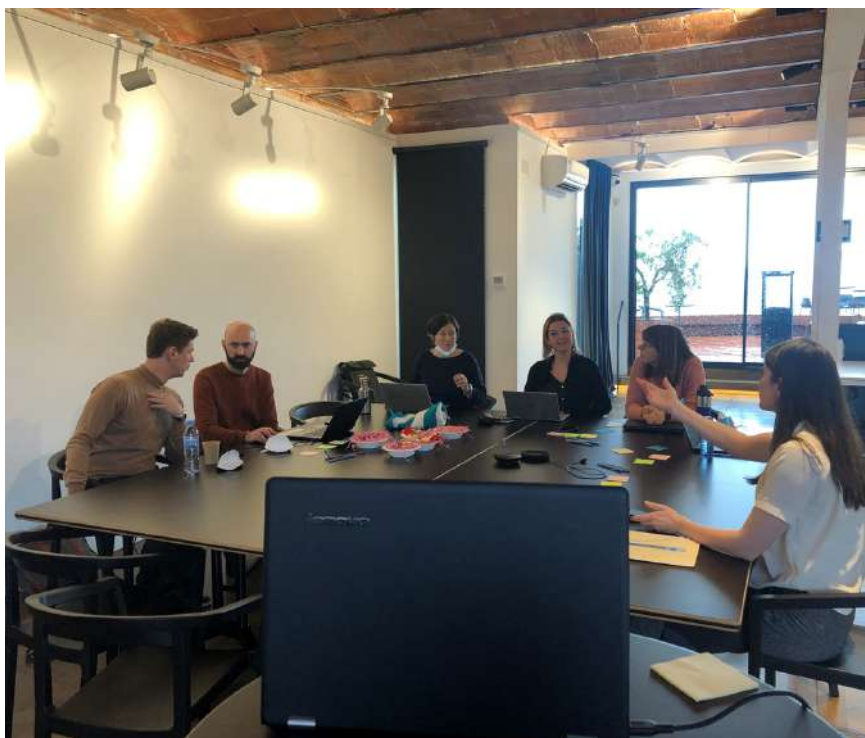
4. *Work only on things that interest you and try not to replicate yourself too much.*

Academia can be creative.

Sometimes when I write interesting papers that challenge me to think, learn and innovate, I feel like an artist.

Other times, I feel like a technocrat. I recommend avoiding the latter and welcoming the former. No matter what your career trajectory is going to be, **try to innovate, enjoy, and think.**

Brainless work is to be avoided- it is a lead cause of dementia.



5. *Work only with nice people you like.*

Life is hard enough, work is hard enough. It is not worth your angst to be around toxic people- **strive to enjoy both work and life.**

6. *Perseverance is the key.*

Do not give up, until you absolutely have to. Remember-looking at your CV as well as at others' CVs reveals only successes. Yet- **for every success in life, we probably have had multiple failures.** Multiple failures for one success. It is always a challenge to keep perseverance in the face of failure. Sometimes we can learn from our failures, but many times we just need to toss them away. Nonetheless, they are here to stay. They will not be written on our CVs, but they will accompany us and we might even remember them better than we remember our successes. **To succeed in academia and possibly in life we have to accept the challenges and keep going.**

6. *Give yourself a break.*

We are all here because we are highly motivated and driven individuals, who strive for perfection. Yet- life is not perfect and we are not perfect.

Yet- life is not perfect and we are not perfect. We must let go of imperfections for the next paper to be published, for the next grant submitted and for our presentation to be prepared on time. Letting go is a skill that we must accept to do more.

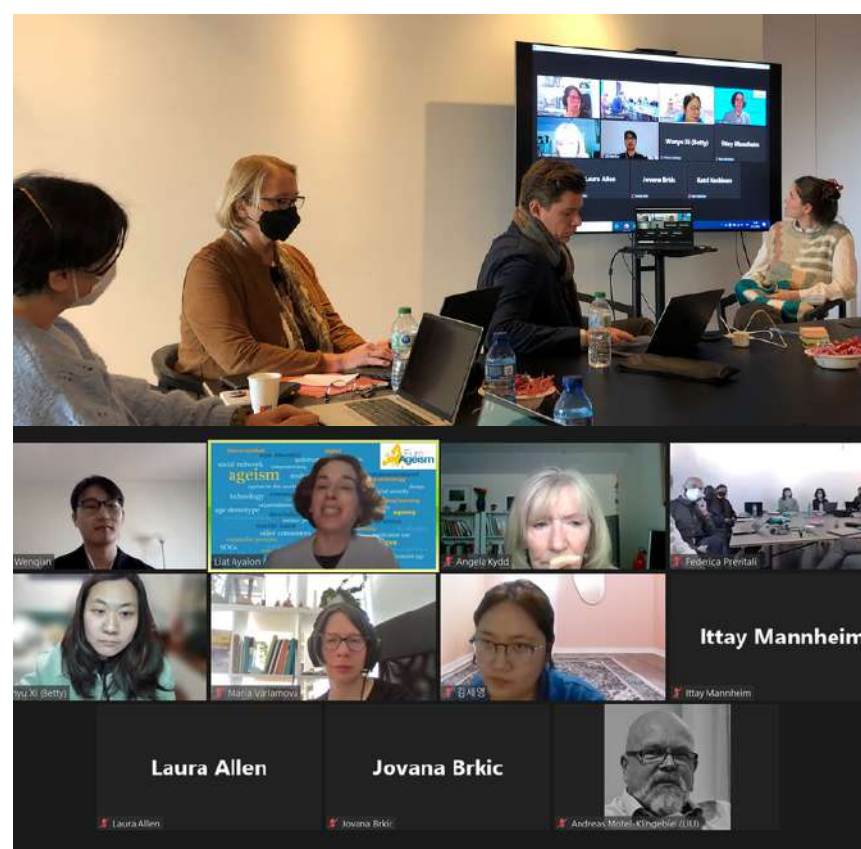
That's it- I think that I have covered all the important recommendations that I have for you. **We are now sending you off on your academic, policy, advocacy or whatever career trajectory you might wish to pursue.** We have spoiled you a bit, worked you a bit and taught you a bit. The rest is up to you. You are on your own now, starting a new path. But- you have us mentors and you have each other for support, consultation and collaboration. We also will be happy to write you letters of recommendation in the future.

The rest of my recommendations can be summarized in the song '*Good luck everyone and I do hope we will cross paths in the future*'."

This was a fabulous opening and set a very positive and joyful note for the activities of the day.

INTERACTIVE REFLECTIONS

Written by Stefan Hopf



The interactive reflections were led by Laura Allan and Ittay Mannheim. This was set up as an inclusive forum where all participants had the chance to reflect on different aspects of the training programme as well as their own experiences with the training programme. Participants first reflected on their biggest challenges and successes in a shared conversation, alongside images chosen by the ESRs and supervisors to visually represent these experiences. These reflections highlight **the inseparability of challenge and success**, because even if the

the preparation of scientific papers, conference contributions, joint policy events or the completion and defence of the dissertations are the main challenges for the ESRs, they are also the sources of success. In addition to these primarily training- and career-related considerations, we also took the opportunity to appreciate the professional, but above all the friendly relationships we have built up among ourselves.

...AND SOME FUN DURING LUNCH



At the lunch break, all attendees were instructed by chefs on how to prepare their delicious lunch.



MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT DRAFTING THE FINAL REPORT OF EUROAGEISM

Written by Federica Previtali

In Barcelona, we celebrated the final event of EuroAgeism ITN, but we will all remember the words of our coordinator, Liat, *"this is not the end, the final report needs to be delivered and approved!"*. Our beloved Innovative Training Network is a Horizon Europe funded project and, as such, it needs to follow the regulations of our funder, the European Commission. Periodic reports of our progress have been a fundamental part of this journey and we will miss the regular reporting duties. **Being part of a European-funded project has been a great learning opportunity** as an early-stage researcher. I have familiarized myself with the funder's system, which will be useful in my future career. In the last event, we discussed the final report, an extensive description of our achievements, as individual researchers, as work packages (WP), and as a project.

During this discussion, one interesting point of reflection was how to evaluate the impact of our project which is based on social sciences. Within the academic field, the most used impact measurement is the number of citations received by published papers in academic journals. Nevertheless, this indicator is assessing only the impact

of research on other researchers, as policymakers do not publish in ranked journals and very often scientific publications fail to reach a non-academic audience. Social Sciences have always carried the burden of not being able to measure their impact, compared to hard and life sciences. However, a study by King's College London in 2015 showed that social sciences and humanities have the highest number of citations in policy papers and grey literature (Szomszor, 2022).

"The social impact of research goes beyond citations, it includes the ability to raise awareness on a certain topic, mobilize people to act on certain social challenges and support global changes"

EuroAgeism is an integral part of a global movement to fight ageism, and, in the last 4 years, it had a role in putting ageism on the policy agenda at the international level, but also in spreading the knowledge of what ageism is and how to combat it at the grassroots level. Having an impact on a persons' life means to have reached them, have stimulated a reflection in them and, on these bases, create a change in their everyday behaviours. This is how societal change starts and this is the final goal of our project, which wants to reduce ageism. However, measuring this impact is challenging, if not impossible, and a discussion on how to report it should be started by both funders and researchers.

Moreover, the social impact should be measured in the long run. Social changes, as well as policy changes, require a long time, so reporting on them after 3 years is very difficult and, for this reason, the short-term impact might be very small. EuroAgeism is active in this discussion and proving new inputs on how to measure social impact will also be part of our final report, and this can be, per se, an impact of the project.

EuroAgeism had great results, despite the challenges of reporting everything that happened in 3 years and having to measure lives in numbers. Regarding research, we have published **39 articles in peer-reviewed international journals**, and we have presented our results at **29 international conferences**. Regarding dissemination, we have presented our projects in **35 non-academic talks and presentations**, and we have used especially Twitter to create awareness. The project had an impact on the career trajectory of each of the **15 early-stage researchers** Each of us is now an **ambassador of "fighting ageism"** and will continue the legacy of the project, by continuing research on the topic, by training new early-stage researchers and mentoring students and by working and influencing policies.

When the day was over, the attendees all enjoyed a sociable dinner.

DAY 2: MARCH 22ND

FUTURE COLLABORATION

The first session of the second morning was led by **Nena Georgantzi**. This two-hour session centred on future collaborations. Nena welcomed everyone to the workshop. She started with a free writing exercise and asked all attendees to spend 10 minutes on their own with three different coloured post-it notes to correspond with the questions below. ESRs were then asked to stick all the same coloured post-it notes on the wall or on a Jamboard for those participating online. The topics were:

- List any opportunities or collaborations you already have planned for the future.
- What types of collaborations or projects do you find appealing? List ideas and aspirations concerning collaboration.
- What types of collaborations do you find less appealing? What should we avoid doing in future collaborations and projects?

COMPILING THE FINAL REPORT

Written by Laura Allen

This was the last session of the two-day event and was led by Professor Liat Ayalon with Sigal Bridger. Five main areas of the report were addressed, with all ESRs being reminded that their input to the final report was a commitment they were required to make as part of their contract on the EuroAgeism project. Liat put forward the following points that all ESRs need to consider in their contributions to the full report that Sigal sent on Sunday 20.3.22:

- Please think about what is missing from the final report and where you can add the missing points?
- Please use track changes when adding to the document.
- Please use past-tense language to show that outcomes have been achieved.

All ESRs need to ensure that the Project Officer's (PO) comments are covered within their sections and throughout the document as a whole. As a reminder, the PO's comments were displayed and these are detailed below:

a) Please create/enforce links between the individual research projects to form a holistic overview of the main research topic (ageism) in the EU, as well as to address policy issues at the EU level.

1. Research: joint special issue; collaboration in work packages, co-authored publications.
2. Policy: Joint work together on policy briefs; the policy event in Oct 2021,
3. Dissemination: webinars produced for school-age children, webinars produced for u3a, EuroAgeism policy symposium at International Federation on Ageing conference in Fall 2021.



b) The project results will benefit from increased **collaboration** and coordination concerning the scientific work of the leaders and research teams of Work Package (WP)1, WP2, and WP3.

1. Highlight the collaboration within each WP.

c) Please enhance the **gender dimension** of ageism in all research topics, so that policy implications and recommendations take on board gender differences.

Please go back to the summary of your results section in the report and make sure it mentions gender in some way. Even if your research did not focus on gender specifically, maybe you can write one line about the gender aspects in the literature regarding your topic.

2. Make a table to show some examples. List the page number of the policy brief where gender was mentioned—Jola to create a table in this way.

3. Recommend that the future of research on ageing and ageism should also address non-binary, transgender, intersex, and other genders which are not just men and women.

4. Even if you didn't find gender effects in your analysis, you may mention that as well, because it is a point on its own.

d)The **project potential and its relevance in the context of EU ageing is huge**. The discriminatory effects of ageism should gain more attention in the research and policy recommendations.

1. We should include a section on subsequent recommendations to make to the **Marie Curie program** regarding age. Examples: the **maternity leave** issues—men and women who are “early-stage researchers” are of childbearing age and there should be more clear maternity leave procedures and allowances.

e)The objective of **strengthening the European innovation capacity** needs a specific effort by the Consortium during the second reporting period (RP-2) of the project.

1. Highlight what is innovative and unique about your research, your secondment, this final event, and plans for future collaborations.



CLOSING SESSION

Liat Ayalon went on to discuss the **impact of the whole program**. This was divided into four main areas of impact. Impact of the Training; Impact on Research & Innovation; Impact on Policy and Impact on the ESRs Career Trajectories. Each area is detailed below.

Impact of the program:

Impact of **Training**:

- Demonstrate the number of invited speakers during our events and the number of people who attended.
- Education: any webinars, podcasts, videos that we produced and the impact that they had.
- Use the summary from the “Interactive Reflections” sessions during the Final Event to find themes related to how this program has impacted the ESRs and supervisors (professionally, soft skills, etc.)
- Use the summary of the “Future Collaborations” session during the Final Event to point out the impact that the program has on our career plans and future collaborations.

Impact on **Research & Innovation:**

1. Fill in the table about our presentations with the estimated number of attendees, location of presentation, and general location of the audience (i.e. international, EU, country-wide, etc.).
2. Add concrete numbers of dissemination events and publications—how many people have used, viewed, or cited scientific materials.

Impact on **Policy:**

1. Secondments—fill the table with a description of secondments and any policy briefs.
2. The languages that we ESRs speak and materials translated.
3. Media attention: Add any media interviews or news media impact that you have had.

Impact on **ESRs' career trajectories:**

1. We are now sort of “ageism ambassadors” and we now take our knowledge and understanding of ageism into our next job positions and organizations. How will you incorporate ageism into your next position?

The meeting ended on a happy and hopeful note, all Early Stage Researchers and Supervisors will go along with their professional lives and keep contributing to the research and policies on ageism.



This newsletter was edited by Prof. Angela Kydd and co-edited by Federica Previtali



Thank you for reading!

***This is the last volume of the EuroAgeism
newsletter, we want to thank everyone who
was part of our journey.
This is just the beginning!***

All ideas expressed and findings in this newsletter materials are solely
those of the authors
and do not represent those of the funding agency.



www.euroageism.eu



This project has received funding from the European
Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation
programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant
agreement No 764632.