

To: Advocates for Healthy, Active Ageing

**Fr: Pass It On Network (Co-founders Moira Allan & Jan Hively;
Slovenia Liaison & e-Professor Emeriti Network Leader, Joze Gricar)**

Re: Encouraging every country to appoint a Minister for Seniors

How can we seniors do good for the seniors - for ourselves?

Given the growing proportion of elderly people in most countries and their increasing contributions to the silver economy, it is encouraging to see that some have a government minister with responsibilities for senior citizens. Here are the links to the websites for the Minister for Seniors in [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Malta](#), [New Zealand](#), [Scotland](#), and [Wales](#).

Many seniors are either still employed or working by looking after others – their children, grandchildren, and others in their communities – rather than being in need of help themselves. Seniors have know-how in every field to share with younger generations. Their technical, cognitive, and relational skills should be transmitted to children, youth, and younger adults. The more seniors there are, the more diverse the society. We need to recognise this and develop policymakers and administrators who will encourage multi-generational learning and working and leading. It is important for governments in every country to encourage all citizens to collaborate and build a stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient society.

Why is it important to appoint a Minister for Seniors in every country?

The idea of having a Minister for Seniors is based upon the experience of several countries. It was first presented in the article *All Countries Need a Minister for Seniors*, by Gričar J. (p153), published in [Reports from 2020 World Day of Older Persons. A Contribution of the European Association of Professors Emeriti](#). The Bulletin of the European Association of Professors Emeriti. Supplement 2020; 1(S1): 113-165.

Having a minister solely responsible for seniors ensures that policies of particular concern to seniors, such as health care and financial security, are responsive to the expressed needs voiced by seniors. The minister has to be proactive in ensuring that a broad array of voices have offered advice from all areas and regions of the country. The minister for seniors should be expected to help the government better understand and develop programs and services that are responsive to both the human needs and the

productivity of older people. She/he should support other ministers on mutually beneficial initiatives across government functions that impact seniors.

She/he must have an “equal voice at the table” with other ministers when speaking on behalf of seniors. Of great importance is the minister’s collaboration with his/her fellow ministers of health/ work/ families/education and social development, and on partnerships to promote active and healthy aging. This includes learning from and building on government-supported programs that have proven successful and are supporting the needs of seniors and their families, as well as actions indicated in the [Decade of Healthy Aging: Baseline report](#), World Health Organization 2021-2030.

In order to engage openly with innovative experts and stakeholders on matters related to the health, well-being and quality of life of seniors, the Minister for Seniors would be expected to establish and maintain a representative national Seniors Council. For example, see the [National Seniors Council](#) organized by the Government of Canada.

What is the potential for the Minister for Seniors shifting attitudes about ageing?

Countries need to think differently about ageing to realize the potential of the growing senior population. It is necessary to ensure government investments in home care, community care and palliative care result in well-coordinated services that have the intended impacts, especially for low-income citizens.

An important focus should be to make sure that ageist barriers are removed for seniors who want to remain in the workforce. More work is required to bridge the gaps between research, education and practice by fostering collaborative partnerships among students, educators and community members.

Collaborative projects can establish meaningful roles for seniors in their communities by expanding connections with young people, identifying community programs that seniors with mild to moderate problems can take part in, and educating young students to increase their knowledge and awareness of aging.

The knowledge and competencies of experienced seniors contribute more than just an intergenerational bond in the workplace. Their contributions of previously acquired goods, values and other assets pave the way for the success of younger generations. Cyber reality is driven by the technology of data accumulation, but life is played out in the causes and consequences of its use.

Stimulated by our liaison from Slovenia, Jozse Gricar, and his fellow members of the [Professors Emeriti Network](#), the Pass It On Network is interested in actively pursuing the opportunities offered by the [Silver Economy](#) to expand the assets and reduce the problems posed by a [long-lived society](#).

What relevance does this have for your country?

We ask that wherever you are located, you will find out who is responsible for your country's policies and services for seniors. To whom does he/she report? Who represents seniors in the UN discussions about passing a UN convention protecting the rights of older persons? Is a Minister (Commissioner) for Seniors needed? Please fill in the information on your country in our [Minister Survey](#)

We would like to compile the information and report it back to you.

Thank you.

Links to the Ministers of (for) Seniors (see the end of the first paragraph)

[Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services, Minister for Sport](#)

[Minister of Seniors Canada](#)

[Hon. Dr. Michael Farrugia, MD, Minister, Ministry for Senior Citizens and Active Aging](#), Valletta, Malta

[Diane Turner, Director, Office for Seniors, New Zealand](#), Wellington

[Shirley-Anne Somerville, Secretary for Social Security and Older People](#), Ministry for Older People and Equalities, Scottish Government Edinburgh

[Heléna Herklots CBE, Commissioner, Older People's Commissioner for Wales](#)



[European Association of Professors Emeriti](#)

[EAPE BULLETIN ISSUE 2021; 2\(3\): 46-68 PDF](#)