



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS

Irish Senior Citizens Parliament

14 May 2025

May I offer my warmest greetings to all those gathered for this year's annual meeting of the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament. May I express my deep appreciation, too, for the vital work undertaken by the ISCP in championing the rights, needs, and voices of older people throughout our country, in advocating for a society that recognises, respects and cherishes the contribution of its older members. It is such vital work. Molaim sibh.

Today's gathering is an important one, an opportunity to reflect on where we are as a society in our attitudes and responses to ageing, and to renew our shared commitment to building a future where growing older is not seen as a challenge to be managed, but as a stage of life to be celebrated.

Ireland, like many nations, is undergoing a profound demographic shift. The number of people aged 65 years and above rose by more than 40% between 2013 and 2023, from 569,000 to 806,000, and is expected to double again to 1.6 million by 2051.

Never before have so many of our citizens lived for so long. Never before have we too, as a society, been presented with such a powerful opportunity to benefit from the contribution of those who have lived rich and diverse lives, from the legacy of experience, wisdom, and care that they bring to our collective lives.

This places a profound responsibility on all of us to ensure that our ageing population is supported, included, and enabled to live with dignity, independence, and fulfilment, and to ensure that our health and social services evolve to meet the changing and diverse needs of our ageing population.

We must, as a society, reaffirm our commitment to fostering a holistic, inclusive and compassionate approach to ageing, in continuing to shape a society that supports our citizens in remaining healthy, independent, and actively engaged, to be active participants in our modern Ireland.

Recognising the value of positive ageing is an approach that acknowledges the full spectrum of what it means to grow older: the joys of continued engagement, creativity, and learning; the need for connection and community; the right to appropriate care and support; and the imperative of participation in the democratic and cultural life of the nation.

Such a vision flourishes in a republic where the rights and worth of every individual are upheld and celebrated, regardless of age.

May I take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of Professor Rose Anne Kenny, whose leadership and scholarship have so greatly advanced our understanding of ageing in Ireland and continue to guide our efforts toward creating policies and systems rooted in evidence, empathy, and equity.

Mar Uachtarán na hÉireann, may I commend the work of the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament in continuing to inspire and inform us all, deepening our understanding of what it means to live in solidarity with one another, as we strive to build together a more just, caring, and inclusive Ireland that affirms the equal worth of all citizens at every stage of life.

May I extend my best wishes to everyone taking part in this year's annual meeting of the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir, traoslaím libh is beir beannacht.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Michael D. Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail.

Michael D. Higgins
Uachtarán na hÉireann
President of Ireland