

FALLING WALLS CIRCLE

ROUND TABLE “CHALLENGES AND BEST PRACTICES OF AGEING SOCIETIES”

Population ageing is a global phenomenon that affects both developing and developed countries. From social isolation and loneliness to economic implications and pressure on healthcare systems, increasing life expectancy and declining birth rates lead to a multitude of challenges. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that involves government and healthcare policies, social services, community initiatives, and technological innovations. In this Falling Walls Circle, we gather speakers from Berlin and Oxford who have high expertise on issues regarding the challenges of rapidly ageing societies and highlight potential solutions and approaches.

Panelists: [Henry Marx](#) (Berlin Senate Department for Higher Education and Research, Health and Long-Term Care, DE), [Melinda Mills](#) (University of Oxford, UK), [Diana Rothe](#) accompanied by [robot RoMi](#) (pi4 Robotics, DE), [Elke Schöffner](#) (Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, DE), and moderator [Irene Tracey](#) (University of Oxford, UK).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. We need a holistic approach to better understand the implications of ageing.** The panelists urge policy makers to collaborate with medical institutions and researchers in creating adaptable frameworks and infrastructure changes. Multimodal factors – biological and hereditary as well as societal and environmental – have to be taken into account. Proposed actions include affordable living options for pensioners, improved public transportation, and fostering social cohesion while fighting loneliness. The use of novel technologies like the nursing assistant RoMi opens new possibilities for care workers. As demonstrated live on stage, the robot can talk. He delivers small items, drinks, and food.
- 2. Adapt to the needs of different age groups.** A modern healthcare system must be able to adapt medical judgment for the age of its respective patients, develop staging systems for diseases and special diagnostics, and offer a sense of autonomy and control for patients regarding their care options. Cross-country learning, for example from the UK's Advanced Care Planning approach, which actively focuses on understanding end-of-life preferences, and international collaboration, such as the sharing of population data, can help to create best practices.
- 3. Living longer is not negative.** Most individuals age rather well. Even though an elderly population challenges our pension and healthcare systems, the fact that people live longer than ever and have more years to enjoy their life should be seen as a blessing, not a burden, says Secretary of State Henry Marx. According to Marx, the countries can learn a lot from each other in regard to the discussion culture around ageing. We have to turn the narrative around.

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