

## **Budapest 7 March Elizabeth Sclater**

Many thanks for inviting me to speak – will only say a few words from the UK. 2012 was quite a year for the UK – the Olympics – where many older women volunteered as ‘games makers and greeters

The Queen’s Diamond jubilee

And of course the European Year

Despite few if any resources from EU for events – our government did respond by appointing a part time coordinator which enabled all the events across the UK to be promoted in one place – indeed there were about 72 events over the year which were badged under the year. All nations in the United Kingdom were represented with intergenerational initiatives in Northern Ireland, the launch of the Ageing well strategy in Wales, Age UK’s fit as a fiddle in England and a wonderful creative festival in Scotland which included a 70+ ladies rock band from Finland. Members of the band had learned their instruments since retirement!

Older women have featured too in the political world with the Labour party (opposition) currently undertaking an older women’s commission in which I will participate with written evidence from our CEADW report and at a round table discussion

In addition Women’s Hour our famous daily radio programme asked listeners to vote for the 100 most powerful women in the UK today. The first four are all over 50 – which is not surprising, and include the Queen at 86, our Home Secretary, 56 – seen as very influential and effective among Conservatives, Anna Boitin, 53 who heads up Santander bank in the UK and Baroness Hale, 68 who is the only women to sit in our Supreme Court.

We can certainly celebrate their positions – even if we do not agree with their actions. For example – our Home Secretary is on record as wanting to get rid of the UK’s Human Rights Act – a very political animal she is concerned about the rise of the very right wing parties who may take votes away from the Conservatives at the next general election.

Indeed – the Government is reviewing the current equality legislation – as they have a view that it is burdensome and costly for the public sector – we as NGOs are working together to submit evidence to the review that the requirements under the act, benefit society and add value to business. Due to report in early July we will see what evidence they have gathered and how they have listened to those that it affects most.

So in celebrating today – we acknowledge those women who have gone before to create a just and fair society and support those who continue the fight!