

Dear WHO Director General,

As the socio-economic core of the Adana urban area and the fifth most populous metropolitan district of Turkey, Seyhan is home to 796 thousand people. Being a destination of migration since the 19th century's industrial cotton production era in Southern Turkey, Seyhan is still a regional hub for trade, industry, social life and public services.

Despite being famed for its dynamic young population due to economic migration, Seyhan's population is aging at a significant phase, as a result of factors such as; easy access to healthcare and public services, and urban families' desire to live close to their elders. According to the 2020 data of Turkish Statistical Institute, 11.8 percent of the Seyhan population is over the age of 60, who deserve an active-aging environment to be happier, healthier, decision making participants of urban life.

As it is underlined by the words of our great leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk; "The attitude of a nation towards its elderly citizens and retirees is the most important criterion of that nation's vitality". Making Seyhan a livable district for all age and gender groups is our priority and we are working hard to make the lives of our elderly citizens better in all areas of life. Our municipality played a pioneering role for the wellbeing of the elderly during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. We provided daily catering for our citizens living alone aged 65 years old and over and worked as a part of the support hotline during the lockdown. Our mobile personal care service for the elderly and disabled continues for years, increasing its capacity, reaching over 1700 people in 2020. Our personal care team includes physiotherapy, personal hygiene and nursing services. We do not see the elderly just as the beneficiaries of social services but also as active participants of decision making processes. In order to strengthen their mechanisms and capacity to take part in the decision making processes about the municipal activities, we established a 'youngest-old council' within our city council this year. This council, with its members retired from a diverse range of professions -including public sector, engineering, architecture, academia and private sector etc.- provides guidance to our municipal governance for making Seyhan more age-friendly.

Keeping in mind that all of our citizens are potential elderlies, we are determined to increase our capacity for age-friendly local governance and administration. We believe that local administrations of the world have a lot to learn from each other and 'the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities' is a valuable network for mutual learning and sharing experience. We would like to participate to this network to cooperate with our fellow local administrations for creating an age-friendly world, while furthering our efforts for creating a more age-friendly Seyhan.

Yours sincerely,

Mayor of Seyhan

Akif Kemal Akay

