(Anexo 5)

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COMMITMENT LETTER TO THE WHO GLOBAL NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

October 6, 2026, Serpa - Portugal

WHO Secretariat of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities

I am pleased to address this commitment letter, to express the interest of the city of *Serpa, Portugal,* to join the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

This commitment reflects the municipality's strategic investment in promoting active and healthy ageing, as well as its intention to strengthen integrated local responses to demographic change. The municipality recognises ageing as a central structural challenge, but also as an opportunity to reinforce community cohesion, intersectoral collaboration and quality of life across all age groups.

The Municipality of Serpa is currently facing a pronounced demographic ageing process. According to Census 2021 data, the resident population is 13,757 inhabitants, reflecting a population decrease of 11.9% compared to 2011. Approximately 28% of the population is aged 65 years or older. The ageing index has increased significantly over the last decade, rising from 206.7 in 2011 to 245 in 2021, a value substantially higher than both the national average and the Baixo Alentejo regional average.

This demographic trend is accompanied by a decline in younger population groups and a reduction in birth rates, suggesting a continued trajectory of population ageing in the coming years. The dependency ratio of older adults has also increased from 41.9% to 47%, reflecting a growing proportion of older residents relative to the working-age population.

Within this context, the Municipality of Serpa has identified ageing as a key priority for local development policy, with particular emphasis on promoting social participation, reducing isolation, strengthening community support networks, and enhancing access to health-promoting and age-inclusive activities. Priority is also given to improving accessibility and mobility across the territory, particularly in a geographically dispersed context.

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In terms of existing initiatives, the Municipality of Serpa has already developed several structured responses in the field of active ageing, including:

- Senior Academies, promoting lifelong learning, social participation and cognitive stimulation
- Teleassistance Programme, aimed at supporting safety, autonomy and daily living at home
- "Gente em Movimento" Programme, promoting regular physical activity

The Municipality of Serpa also has an approved Municipal Plan for Active and Healthy Ageing covering the period 2025 to 2026, which provides a strategic framework for ongoing and future interventions in this domain. A new Municipal Plan for Active and Healthy Ageing, covering the period 2027 to 2030, is currently under development.

By submitting this letter, the Municipality of Serpa commits to complying with the stages of the Age-Friendly Cities and Communities process, and fully adheres to the mission, vision and values promoted by the World Health Organization, as established in the *Terms of Reference* of the Global Network.

The municipality reaffirms its intention to strengthen policies and practices that promote healthy ageing, social inclusion, and the creation of more age-friendly environments, while actively engaging in knowledge exchange and collaboration with other cities and communities at international level.

We sincerely hope that this application will be favourably considered.

Yours faithfully,

Francisco José Palma Picareta, mayor of Serpa

October 6, 2026