

## **P7\_TA(2010)0313**

### **Long-term care for older people**

#### **European Parliament resolution of 9 September 2010 on long-term care for older people**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the European Charter of Fundamental Rights,
  - having regard to the proposed directive on the equal treatment of persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (COM(2008)0426),
  - having regard to the question of 30 June 2010 to the Commission on long-term care for older people (O-0102/2010 – B7-0457/2010),
  - having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
1. Calls on Member States to consider the demographic developments in recent years, especially the ageing of population, leading to increased budgetary pressures and high demand for better health and social care infrastructure; Encourages Member States to fight against social exclusion against elder people and any type of discrimination based on age;
  2. Reminds Member States that ensuring access to adequate health and care services is a fundamental principle of the European model of solidarity;
  3. Recognising the importance of both the quality and continuity of care, calls on Member States to improve, facilitate, and encourage specialist training, education and reinsertion measures for all those people, including informal carers and those requiring professional qualifications, with long-term care responsibilities for older people; such training may also help improve the status of this important work. Urges Member States to tackle the issues of poor payment of care work, shortage of personnel, lack of training or inadequate training, which all put a strain on care provision. Notes the important contribution made by civil society, church and charity organisations in the provision of care;
  4. Notes the importance of further development of "e-Health" in order to improve productivity and effectiveness of care provision, and also to support the informal carers and older people themselves;
  5. Calls on the Commission and Member States to take into account the needs of informal carers, who provide a significant proportion of care for older people, and to take concrete measures to support and safeguard this resource via training, respite and measures to reconcile work and family life;
  6. Maintains that guarantees should be in place in all Member States to protect the fundamental rights of persons receiving long-term care and to that end calls on the Member States to bring greater attention than hitherto to bear on the enforcement of, and compliance with, quality criteria for service provision;
  7. Calls on the Member States to support older people in every way necessary to ensure that

they can manage by themselves in their own homes and to provide means of help enabling them to cope better in that environment, given that this being the best alternative to institutional care;

8. Calls on the Member States, under their domestic legislation, to regulate the qualification requirements for welfare workers caring for older people and to devise and implement advanced training systems to help raise the educational level of those working in the eldercare system and hence improve the quality of the services offered;
9. Regrets that in many Member States the funding and provision of specialist geriatric medicine has been reduced over the years, and that not sufficient training has been given to other specialists on older people's issues. Notes that this has in many cases led to a reduction in the quality of care provided to older people and which, at times, constitutes unfair discrimination against them. Calls on Member States to keep this situation under review, with a view to increasing resources in this area should it be necessary;
10. Calls on the Member States to provide support, as a matter of priority, for the establishment of home palliative care units;
11. Asks the Commission to collect data and draw up a summary of the institutional, community and home care infrastructure for older people in each Member State;
12. Calls for minimum standards for all contracts in the care sector, including minimum wages;
13. Calls for more research to be done by the Commission to establish the number of deaths among older people in long-term care that are attributable to malnutrition or dehydration;
14. Calls on the Member States to pursue an information and prevention policy aimed at older people, focusing especially on dietary choices and prevention of the risks of dehydration;
15. Notes that the EU policy on older people is based on the principle of 'society for all', requiring Member States to guarantee that people of different ages have a full opportunity to participate actively in community life, irrespective of their age;
16. Advocates the introduction of programmes providing in-home welfare assistance and health care for the elderly or, in those countries where such arrangements already exist, the continuation thereof, to be administered by the municipal and local authorities within their respective terms of reference;
17. Calls for a Green Paper to be produced by the Commission on elder abuse and safeguarding older people in the community and in all care settings, including a focus on patient mobility and details of best practices already existing in the 27 Member States;
18. Calls on the Commission to prepare a study which will give a clearer picture of the increasing requirements for the care of older people and an estimate of the anticipated specialist provision for the period until 2020;
19. Calls, through the Open Method of Coordination, for an exchange of information, policy ideas and best practice between Member States on the provision of long-term care for older people and, in particular, measures and minimum professional standards in order to:
  - (a) reduce health inequalities and safeguard older people in the community and in care

settings,

(b) tackle elder abuse,

(c) adopt human resource strategies to fight against staff shortages,

(d) and help disseminate information and communications technologies to promote the (care within families and) independence of older people;

20. Urges the Commission to make every effort to ensure acceptable standards of healthcare for all European citizens, whatever their material circumstances;
21. Calls on the Member States and the Commission, given that the EU population is ageing across the board, to pursue every form of cooperation with a view to devising sustainable financing systems for long-term care provision so as to ensure that a sustainable system will be in place in the future to finance eldercare provision and that the necessary care services will be available;
22. Calls for the exchange of best practices in finding the most effective ways of developing intergenerational relations, so as to increase the involvement of family members in long-term care arrangements, resulting in a number of benefits and making it possible to meet more successfully the individual needs of care recipients;
23. Calls for the development of an integrated active ageing strategy seeking involvement of the elderly in social and cultural activities;
24. Calls for measures to be taken in response to the substantial increase in the number of elderly people, so as to ensure that they have equal access to welfare services;
25. Calls on the Member States to reduce the burden on those who care for older people or people with disabilities and – to enable carers to take up employment – set up integrated care systems;
26. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.