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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Improving the physical and mental health of children affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster: developing and strengthening solidarity in Europe

Motion for a resolution[1]
tabled by Mr Andrea RIGONI and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

A number of countries offer temporary visits for children affected by the Chernobyl disaster and who still suffer from devastating effects on their mental and physical health.

This disaster affected several European countries, in particular Belarus and to a lesser extent Ukraine, and involved 2.5 million people, among whom there were more than 500 000 children.

This area of Europe experiences very difficult socioeconomic conditions, making families even more vulnerable, which in turn results in the tragic phenomenon of children being abandoned by their parents in orphanages and institutions for children with disabilities.

Every year many European countries, including Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom, play host for short periods of time to children, mainly from Belarus; in particular, Italy, hosts around 30 000 children annually from Belarus and 6 000 from Ukraine.

It is essential that this phenomenon be managed in the best way possible. It is necessary to ensure respect of fundamental children's rights and in particular the right to health, as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was signed in New York on 20 November 1989.

It is unfortunate that these mutual assistance and solidarity visits take place only from time to time. They should be structured, consolidated and their results evaluated; European states should make a long-term commitment and the results of these experiences should be positive for the child in terms of health and emotional well-being, and in view of the strong links that are formed between the child, who in many cases has been shown no affection, and the host family.

Signed (see overleaf)

1. Referred to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, for information: Reference No. 3426 (see 11th Sitting, 14 April 2008).

Signed[2]*:*

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2. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group