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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Health-care rationing: a threat to equal access to health?

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Bernard MARQUET and other members of the Assembly

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

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Inequalities in access to health, information and care are on the increase in Council of Europe member states, with the well-off and well-educated part of the population enjoying easy access to the resources allocated and disadvantaged groups experiencing greater difficulties. Demographic changes and changes in household structure affect the supply of informal care, which may increase the demand for formal health and long-term care services in the future. At the same time, the health needs of migrants, including undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers, have to date received relatively little attention.

At a time when expectations of health-care systems are rising, governments face the central question as to how health-care should be funded and organised. Concern about scarce resources and an expenditure crisis in health-care have led to the introduction of major changes in how health-care is organised, financed and administered, via public and private mechanisms – and, in some countries, has led to the introduction of health-care rationing.

The Parliamentary Assembly is concerned that the impact of different funding methods and of recent societal changes will fall most heavily on vulnerable groups: the poor, the sick, the elderly, migrants and minorities. Health-care rationing, in particular, may involve a loss of equity and pose a threat to equal access to health.

The Assembly recommends that member states fully implement the 2005 Warsaw action plan in which they agreed that protection of health as a social human right is an essential condition for social cohesion and economic stability. The Assembly therefore calls for equal access to health-care and treatment for everyone living in Europe without discrimination, including on the basis of immigration status or financial means.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
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