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Improving children's access to child-friendly health and social services

Motion for a resolution

tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

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

Children are in need of specialised attention by social services, though this is not always guaranteed in reality as family services often overlook children's specific needs when dealing with families in crisis, while there are many cases of domestic violence involving children. Additionally, children are not always appropriately consulted in decisions concerning their care when being removed from their families. Likewise, national public health services do not always sufficiently take children's specific needs into account to ensure that children be treated with dignity, that they may participate in decisions concerning them and that they may have equitable access to quality health care.

In order to improve the situation of children with regard to social and health services of different kinds and to once again promote the best interest of the child as a global principle provided for by the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe adopted and disseminated specific standards in recent years. These in particular include the Council of Europe Recommendation Rec(2011)12 by the Committee of Ministers on children's rights and social services friendly to children and families and the Council of Europe guidelines on child-friendly health care (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 September 2011).

Despite the current budgetary crisis touching many public services, efforts to provide child-friendly health and social services need to be maintained and stepped up. In order to follow-up and further promote Council of Europe standards, as well as to give more visibility to examples of good practice to be followed, the Parliamentary Assembly should launch a specific activity in this field to promote health and social services which take into account the specific and specialised needs of children.

