Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2168 (2017)[1]

Human rights of older persons and their comprehensive care

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly welcomes the growing trend towards strengthening the protection of older persons' human rights, reflected by the adoption of regional legal instruments specifically devoted to older persons' rights, including by the Council of Europe. Despite this positive trend, widespread negative stereotypes of older persons continue, alas, to be at the root of age discrimination and violence against them, as well as of their isolation and exclusion.

2. The Assembly notes that accessing good-quality health care and long-term care still remains a challenge for many older persons in Europe. In addition to the physical and financial barriers they encounter, older persons often suffer from care being delayed or even denied as a result of the fragmentation of health- and social-care services. Other major concerns in this context are the lack of sufficient health-care staff with adequate knowledge of geriatrics, and the absence of a person-centred approach which would help older persons maintain their autonomy and quality of life.

3. The Assembly is appalled by one estimate which suggests that at least 4 million older persons in the World Health Organization's European Region experience maltreatment in any one year. Against such a background, it is all the more worrying that abuse of older persons remains a taboo subject in many countries and thus an under-reported problem.

4. The Assembly further notes that older persons are disproportionally affected by isolation and loneliness, which has an impact on their health and well-being, and can lead to their social exclusion. They are also an economically vulnerable group prone to poverty, another major element contributing to their exclusion.

5. In view of the above, the Assembly calls on the Council of Europe member States to take the following measures with a view to combating ageism, improving care for older persons and preventing their social exclusion:

5.1. ensure a minimum living income and appropriate housing for older persons with a view to enabling them to live in dignity;

5.2. prohibit, in law, age discrimination in the provision of goods and services;

5.3. provide support for continued employment and training for those who want it;

5.4. promote a positive attitude to ageing through awareness-raising campaigns targeting the media, service providers and the general public;

5.5. ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of health care and long-term care for older persons;

5.6. integrate health- and social-care services for older persons;

5.7. ensure adequate training of health-care professionals in geriatrics and establish geriatric centres throughout the territory where possible;

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee*, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 30 May 2017 (see Doc. 14320, report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Lord George Foulkes).
See also Recommendation 2104 (2017).

5.8. foster a person-centred approach in the provision of care, by organising it around the needs and preferences of older persons, and involving them in its planning;

5.9. adopt a charter of rights for older persons in care settings, to be used, *inter alia*, to empower older persons and to monitor long-term care institutions by an independent body;

5.10. ensure appropriate assistance and support for older persons living in their homes, including medical and nursing care, meals on wheels and domestic assistance;

5.11. ensure financial and practical support for informal caregivers, including training, counselling and advice, and take measures to offer them respite;

5.12. raise awareness of physical, psychological and financial abuse of older persons, and collect relevant data, including on associated risk factors, with a view to drawing up an action plan to eliminate such abuse;

5.13. promote active ageing by developing age-friendly environments, including spaces for joint activities between older persons and younger generations with a view to fostering intergenerational ties;

5.14. encourage volunteering by older persons, both in their own country and abroad, as well as volunteering to support older persons.