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23 April 2013

Ensuring equal treatment and dignified care for the elderly

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Riitta MYLLER and other members of the Assembly

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

Growing life-expectancy and reduced birth-rates have led to an increase in the number of older persons and their relative share within society. This dramatic demographical change combined with a tough economic situation puts serious strains on health care, social security and pension systems all over Europe. Lately there has been an increase in reports on neglect and serious shortcomings in elderly care. According to a World Health Organization (WHO) report from 2011, at least 4 million elderly people in Europe are estimated to experience ill-treatment, and this figure is projected to increase further. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights has also voiced his concern.

There are many problems related to care for the elderly and some of them may even constitute serious violations of human rights. For instance, denying a person the right to decide what to wear or eat, where to go or when to go to bed can be considered as a breach on human dignity. Intruding while a person takes a call, opening post without being asked or preventing relationships with the opposite sex may constitute a violation of the right to privacy. Lack of consideration for organising care in the vicinity to a person's spouse could be a breach of the right to family life. Even setting the cost of care to be equivalent to a person's pension hampers their possibility to make personal care choices. Equal and humane treatment should be the guiding principle for care.

The Parliamentary Assembly urgently needs to address respect for human rights for the elderly. Our aim should be to establish a set of recommendations and call for minimum standards to ensure treatment and dignified care for the elderly.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group