Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Impact of COVID-19 on children's rights

Motion for a resolution
tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

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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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While our knowledge of SARS-COV-2 is now based on an increasingly solid foundation of data, it appears that children have paid and will continue to pay the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the years to come. Children's well-being itself has been called into question. Their physical and mental health has been affected: their vulnerability is more evident than ever, even though they are only passengers and we, the adults, are in control.

The pandemic has destabilised the lives of children through the imposition of physical distancing. Children have had to face domestic violence and increased sexual abuse, have been further exposed to online violence and may have been denied access to social protection and health care in an exceptional context of saturation of healthcare facilities. It is to be feared that they will bear the brunt of the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, even in protected environments. Children in situations of poverty, children of minority origin, children in care in public institutions or prisons, and migrant and refugee children are among the most seriously affected. In the rest of the world, the ILO and UNICEF fear, for the first time in ten years, an increase in child labour.

The Parliamentary Assembly should analyse how the vulnerability of children has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, in the light of the best interests of the child which is its guiding principle, assess how this scourge will continue to weigh on children's well-being and propose guidelines highlighting Council of Europe standards and good practices. It is the duty of the Assembly to call attention to the situation of this particularly vulnerable population, who do not always have a say, and to support the protection of children during the worst economic crisis since the Second World War.