

EUROPEAN CHARTER ON THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OLDER PEOPLE IN NEED OF LONG TERM CARE

Update

APRIL - JUNE 2010

15 June 2010, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day: the European Charter is now ready!

The European Charter developed by the EUSTACEA project aims to become instrumental in achieving policy change at the EU and national level to protect the dignity of dependant older people and to serve as a reference for the development of European quality standards for long-term care.

The European Charter was adopted by a vast majority by AGE General Assembly on 7 May 2010, and will be launched officially on the 15th of June, World Awareness day against elder abuse. On that occasion, a large number of older people's organisations will hold events and awareness-raising activities; as an example, the Swedish Eustacea partner SPF (Swedish pensioners organization) will hand the European Charter to its Government on the 15th of June, and the Greek partner Hellas 50+ will organize a meeting on elder abuse in Athens.

We would like to invite you to join the institutions and organisations who support the European Charter and help us disseminate it widely to all relevant stakeholders (List of Signatories posted on AGE Platform Europe's website¹).

The Charter is completed and clarified by an **accompanying guide** targeting caregivers, policy-makers, and older people's organisations, which is currently being developed by the partners and will be finalised in November 2010. This guide should enable all actors to take ownership of the principles stated in the Charter and to adapt it to their national or local context.

With these documents, AGE Platform Europe seeks to promote a better quality of care in Europe, to give a voice to older people, and ensure that they are heard by the whole society. In particular, AGE seeks to develop **European mandatory quality standards for long-term care services** and to implement adequate measures to fight elder abuse, including in informal care settings.

¹ <http://www.age-platform.eu/en/daphne?start=5>

Finally, we welcome the decision of the EMPL (Employment and Social Affairs) committee in the European Parliament on 2nd of June to adopt the oral question and motion for resolution on long-term care for older people, especially Article 4 of the Resolution calling for a green paper on elder abuse and safeguarding older people in the community and in care settings².

Project news

The European Charter is now finalised and aims at being disseminated!

AGE Platform Europe's General Assembly adopted, by a vast majority on 7 May, the European Charter of the rights and responsibilities of older people in need of long-term care and assistance. The preamble of the Charter has been improved to clarify the aims and context of the Eustacea project.

You can find the final text in English, Swedish, Dutch, Italian and Czech on AGE's website: <http://www.age-platform.eu/en/daphne>. Please do not hesitate to disseminate it!

For action !

Please show your support to the European Charter by adding the name of your organization to the List of signatories. **The more organizations support it, the more the European Charter will have an impact.** To do so, please send the name of your organization and contact details to maude.luherne@age-platform.eu. You can consult the list of signatories on AGE's website at: <http://www.age-platform.eu/en/daphne?start=5>.

Daphne Steering Group meetings in Roma (Italy) and Ljubljana (Slovenia) in April and May

EUSTaCEA partners gathered in Roma on 13-14 April and in Ljubljana on 13-14 May. These two meetings helped finalise the European charter. The partners are now working on the accompanying guide of the Charter, which aims at giving some concrete examples to caregivers on how the European Charter can be implemented. These examples will be illustrated by good practices existing in the European countries. The guide will provide recommendations to policy makers at all levels and to older people's organizations as well.

You can access all the information and the follow-up of the project on AGE's dedicated webpage at the following address: http://www.age-platform.org/EN/article.php?id_article=738. Please don't hesitate to send us your ideas on how the charter can be implemented.



Next steering group meeting was held on the 15th of June in Utrecht (Netherlands), where the partners will improve a first version of the accompanying guide.

² Oral question :

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/empl/qo/808/808842/808842en.pdf

Motion for resolution:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/empl/re/810/810508/810508en.pdf

Call for concrete examples on how the European Charter can be implemented and improve the quality of care for older people

We are looking for examples on how the European Charter can be implemented concretely in institutional settings as well as in informal care. These examples can be illustrated by good practices, with contact details of the organization and a short summary to be put on AGE's website.

You can find a first list of good practices that will serve as a basis for the work on our accompanying guide here: <http://www.age-platform.eu/en/daphne?start=4>.

What's going on in European countries?

France : French government discuss on the results of an assessment made on the conformity of 270 institutions specializing in older people's care

On the 4th of June, the French minister of Labour and the Secretary of State in charge of older people went to visit the Regional Health Agency (Agence Régionale de Santé, ARS) of Ile de France to discuss the results of an assessment of 270 institutions specializing in older people's care. They both stressed that elder abuse in all forms (physical, psychological, moral, neglect) is unacceptable. They highlighted that the respect of older people's dignity and the quality of service are at the heart of their action. Of the 270 institutions that were designated as not conformed 4 months ago, 91 had progressed to conformity, 155 were progressing, and 3 were closed (or closing). This assessment shows that a coordination between public services and local authorities need to be done, between the assessment of the level of dependence of older people and the inspections made in some institutions.

For more information, please click here (in French) : <http://www.travail-solidarite.gouv.fr/actualite-presse,42/communiqués,95/eric-woerth-et-nora-berra-dressent,11933.html>

France : two examples of financial abuse in Limoges

A woman of 60 years old was judged for financial abuse on her 80 years old cousin suffering from Alzheimer's disease. She robbed around 20 paintings and made her transfer 186.000€ to her bank account and subscribe a life insurance for her. She was given a 6 months suspended prison sentence and obliged to give back the paintings. The victim obtained a symbolic euro for the damages.

Another example: a woman beginning her work as caregiver to an older disabled woman used the credit card of the older person. She also asked for an estimation of the price of her furniture and sold some of them. She was given 6 months suspended prison sentence and was put on probation for 3 years.

From the French newspaper "La Montagne" – 8th May 2010

Ireland: Concern over under-reporting of elder abuse

Concern that there is significant under-reporting of elder abuse has been expressed by the Health Service Executive (HSE) as figures reveal that 1,870 elder abuse allegations were made to the authority last year. This year the HSE is taking steps to increase public awareness and ensure that their database captures all cases referred and being dealt with by the authority. Latest figures show most cases are referred to the HSE by public health nurses.

HSE specialist in services for older people, Paschal Moynihan, said a poor understanding of elder abuse, combined with an acceptance of the problem and a fear of reporting were all factors in under-reporting.

For more information, please click here: <http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/concern-over-under-reporting-of-elder-abuse-121819.html>

Spain: When the older person is a nuisance

Elder abuse is the most silent type of violence. Guiltiness, lack of strength to face it, and cultural obstacles prevent people from reporting it. In Spain, around 60 000 older people have been counted as victims of abuse (0.8%), and it rises to 2.9% for older people in high need of care and assistance. Elder abuse seems to be highly under-estimated, and 4.6% of caregivers themselves recognize they abused an older person. Financial abuse is the more prevalent type of abuse, followed by neglect and psychological abuse. It is very hard to detect elder abuse first because it is a taboo. The victims feel guilty and don't want to report it. The article explains the difficulties faced by caregivers, especially in the family, and the lack of legal protection of older people to face elder abuse as well.

More information on the article (in Spanish) at: http://www.elpais.com/articulo/sociedad/anciano/engorro/elpepisc/20100408elpepisc_1/Tes?print=1

Other European projects and initiatives

Daphne project on elder abuse : Breaking the taboo II

The Daphne-project "Developing and testing tools to train the trainer" builds on the "Breaking the Taboo" project. This project focused on raising awareness among professionals who work in community health and social services for older people on recognizing abuse against older women in the family and acting accordingly. The "Breaking the Taboo Two"-project aims to enable senior staff and/or trainers to carry out one-day workshops on "violence against older women within the family" and train staff members to act as peer advisers on this issue within community health and social service organisations. A kick-off meeting was organized in March and the partners will meet again in September. The brochure developed within the Breaking the Taboo project is available under <http://www.rotekreuz.at/pflege-betreuung/weitere-projekte/#c2500> in English, German, French, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, and Finnish and will be available in Bulgarian and Slovenian shortly.

For further information contact: charlotte.struempel@redcross.at.

Final conference of the ABUEL project, a study on abuse of elderly in Europe – 28th June

Abuel will present its findings at the International Conference, Quality of Life and Maltreatment of Elderly in Europe on the 28th of June 2010. The conference will be held in Madrid in the Assembly Hall at the Ministry of Health and Social Policy. The main aim of the Conference will be to spread the results from the ABUEL Study. Due to its magnitude, this research project presents a landmark in relation to previous studies, for it may offer an innovative view on elderly populations in Europe, regarding aspects such as: quality of life, physical and psychical health and also about their care. Unfortunately, they are victims of abuse and negligence.

For more information, please click here : <http://www.elderlyineuropemadrid2010.com/>

... and in the rest of the world ?

USA: President Obama signed the Elder Justice Act and the Patient Safety and Abuse Prevention Act on March 23, 2010

Increased funding is dedicated to adult protective services, to support the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, and training programs for national organizations and State long-term care ombudsman programs. An Elder Justice Coordinating Council is established at the federal level to propose recommendations within two years to the Secretary of Health and Human Services regarding coordination of federal, state, local, and private agency activities relating to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The main provision of the Patient Safety and Abuse Prevention Act creates a national program of criminal background checks for persons seeking employment in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.

More information on the National center on elder abuse April newsletter, available online at: http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/NCEAroot/Main_Site/Resources/Newsletter/2010/April.pdf

Canada: Elder Abuse Among Immigrants a Growing Concern

Greater Toronto community workers are becoming increasingly concerned about elderly immigrants sponsored to Canada and then abused by family members. Though not a new phenomenon, elder abuse is seen more frequently by workers in immigrant services. The marked increase has been noted since Citizenship and Immigration Canada, under a funding agreement with Ontario in 2005, began investing more resources in seniors' English classes, drop-ins, and recreational programs. Immigrant agencies said frontline workers, friends and neighbours must be vigilant and that they should speak to the (suspected victims) alone because the abusers are always with them. The network launched a 154-language senior safety phone line in April 2009 and received 4,500 calls in its first year.

More information is available here: <http://www.globalaging.org/elderrights/world/2010/immigrants.htm>

Argentina: Health Department Inspects 130 Nursing Homes

Mendoza has historically had a large number of nursing homes which do not have official authorization; it is believed that today there are about 500. The Ministry of Health has begun a series of nursing home inspections in order to regulate the care they provide for residents. In total, 130 nursing homes in the province are pending regulation. The Argentine government wants to assure that the private organizations provide high quality services for older persons with regular inspections of facilities.

More information is available here (in Spanish) : <http://www.globalaging.org/health/world/2010/salud.htm>

Conferences and Publications

UK: Fear of dying in an ethnically diverse society: cross-sectional studies of people aged 65+ in Britain

The aim of the study was to examine fears about dying in an ethnically diverse population sample, and a more homogeneous population sample, aged 65 and over. Conclusions: Enabling older people to express fears about dying is likely to be important when planning supportive end-of-life care. Practitioners should not assume that fears about dying are the same in different social groups, or that extensive family support is protective against such anxiety. Older people from ethnic minorities had more anxieties about dying than others, and were more likely to express fears the more extensive their family supported them. These findings have implications for commissioners and practitioners of primary and secondary care.

More information is available at: <http://pmj.bmj.com/content/86/1014/197.full.html>

Czech Republic: Eustacea partner Zivot 90 introduced the project in a conference

On the 12th May 2010, Ms. Cozlova from Zivot 90 made a speech on the progress made on "interdisciplinary team combating domestic violence", where policemen, social workers, municipal officers and NGOs combating domestic violence were present. She spoke about the Charter and the accompanying guide. She highlighted that domestic violence could be connected with elder abuse and the Eustacea project could contribute in preventing it. She also made a speech on rape of older women and their specificities, and made a link between older women rape and elder abuse and domestic violence. She brought her contribution to the website: www.stopznasilneni.cz and to the newsletter.

For more information, please consult the webpage (in Czech only): <http://www.stopznasilneni.cz/cz/novinky/na-okraji-pozornosti-znasilneni-starsich-osob>, or contact Klara Cozlova at Klara.Cozlova@zivot90.cz.

Further information

See on AGE web site, section Elder abuse (in English only) at : <http://www.age-platform.eu/en/daphne>

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