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Final conference

The European Quality Framework for Long Term care: Principles and guidelines for the wellbeing and dignity of older people in need of care and assistance



14 November 2012 – 14.00 – 18.30

Host and Chair: Heinz Becker, MEP, co-chair of the Intergroup on Ageing and Solidarity between Generations

Meeting Venue: European Parliament, Brussels

Thanks to Mr. Heinz K. Becker office support before, during and after the conference!



Opening speeches



Heinz Becker MEP, co-chair of the Intergroup on Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, welcomed the participants and congratulated them for the outcomes of the WeDO project. WeDO was funded thanks to a call for projects launched by the European Commission upon request of the European Parliament

Mr. Becker said that he hopes a follow-up conference can be organised in a year time and will involve new countries so that the work done by the WeDO partners can benefit others and the WeDO partnership could continue.

Fritz Von Nordheim, DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission, started by welcoming the project results. He considers the WeDO project as the 'state of the art' of what can be done in the field. He is proud that DG EMPL supported such project and detected in it a high EU literacy. He explained that the project addressed well the challenges to raise awareness of the needs of older people in long-term care, to protect them and develop services to help them, but also to avoid dependency, and added that the positive side of this project is that work will not stop with the end of EU funding but will continue both at EU and national level since concrete long-term strategies were discussed and agreed on how to deliver results.

Mr. von Nordheim also stressed that the WeDO project shows why it is important to finance civil society organisations such as AGE Platform Europe, and that this project will certainly be welcomed under the upcoming Irish presidency, through the pillar on independent living. Independent living means to encourage and enable older people to keep living independently even if they need care. This can be achieved by age-friendly environments, adapted devices, etc. The question of cost efficiency is very important as well, but linking it to the 'emotional substance of care'; care is not a machine which delivers help. We still have a long distance to reach the objectives, concluded von Nordheim.

Ms. Lina Papamichalopoulou, Head of Unit for DG Justice, Fundamental rights and citizenship, thanked the organisers and said she represented Vice-President Reding to this event. She said DG Justice is a partner of AGE Platform Europe and sees very well the value of their cooperation with AGE.

A Eurobarometer on antidiscrimination will be soon published and clearly shows that age is the most often cited ground of discrimination. The Eurobarometer will be presented on 23 November at the Equality Summit in Cyprus. Ms. Papamichalopoulou explained that DG Justice is committed to push forward the adoption of a Directive on nondiscrimination in access to goods and services, and will



encourage the Irish Presidency to speed up the process.

Ronan Toomey, Irish Coordinator of European Year 2012 and representative of the upcoming Irish Presidency in this event, thanked the organisers and stated that Ireland is actively promoting active ageing and supports action to fight elder abuse.

According to Mr. Toomey, the EU Quality framework is useful to help ask questions to policy makers on how to reach the objectives of quality of life for older people, i.e. provide solutions that deliver quality. Need for quality is recognized by everybody, he added, including service providers. In Ireland, quality standards were developed together with guidelines for residential care homes, together with mechanisms to fight elder abuse. He announced that soon a national carers strategy will also be launched. He concluded that many activities in Ireland will actually build on the WeDO project results and help to get a more standardized approach in care: developing legislation, home care packages, age-friendly environments, and contribute to the national dementia strategy and the national positive ageing strategy. The WeDO project outcomes should be used in all future work on care in Ireland, as it shares the Irish vision of a society for all ages.

Presentation of the WeDO project and its results

The European Quality framework for long-term care services was presented by **Anne-Sophie Parent**, AGE Platform Europe's Secretary General. She explained that the project is the follow up of another project called EUSTACEA which developed a European Charter for the Rights and responsibilities of older people in need of care and assistance. The WeDO project

builds on this Charter to develop, on the basis of the Social Protection Committee (SPC) EU Quality framework for social services an EU quality framework for long-term care. The project gathered since the beginning very committed partners from 12 countries who shared a common vision on the importance to promote quality care to help prevent elder abuse and promote dignified ageing.. They developed national coalitions of stakeholders who were not always used to work together before the project and they launched national strategies to go on after the end of the project.

Members of the SPC contributed to the project and some took part in the WeDO EU events and national coalitions meetings.

Now that the project is ending, the work will continue thanks to the partners commitment. The WeDO project was hard work but it was also very rewarding and a lot has been achieved already. Some obstacles may come on the way due to the impact of the crisis or elections in some countries. But all partners want to continue to work together and exchange good practices and share experiences.

We hope to achieve results by 2020 with DG EMPL on active ageing, DG JUST on the fight against discrimination, DG REGIO through the Covenant on demographic change, which would really help to involve grass roots stakeholders.



Few examples of national strategies developed in the framework of the WeDO project

Five countries presented briefly their national coalitions' strategy.

Belgium

Dominique Verté, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, introduced the results from the Belgian WeDO coalition. The coalition is broad and includes 27 partners. Its work focused on three main items: 1) spread the word with a focus on communication and dissemination (e.g. standard powerpoints, articles, website texts, etc); 2) promote a participatory methodology, with a focus on older people, their capacities and quality of life, and 3) promote a bottom-up approach, to spread WeDO as an oil stain. Care legislation is fragmented in Belgium; WeDO appears as a unique cooperation to group partners from the different governance levels and communities, but also from different fields (home care, residential care, social work, older people's organisations, research, education, etc). The Belgian national strategy includes a seminar in June 2013, to present the European Quality framework and spread good practices and the development of a train-the-trainer model.



Austria



Monika Wild, Austrian Red Cross, presented the results from the WeDO Austrian coalition. The coalition's members identified that in Austria, there are many individual projects on dignity of older people and prevention of elder abuse, but no national strategy; there is no Charter on rights of older people in long-term care for the moment, but there is an on-going care reform

to be ready in 2013 and strong senior organisations. The coalition is composed of 10-15 members and gathers representatives of the Social Ministry, Provincial governments, seniors organisations, service providers, an umbrella organisation of Residential Care Managers, a research institute and the Austrian Society for Geriatrics and Gerontology. The Austrian WeDO strategy is two-fold: adapt and disseminate the Austria version of the European Charter of rights and responsibilities of older people in need of long-term care and assistance to the target groups (mainly older people and carers), and lobby to reach an adoption by the Austrian Parliament; and disseminate and implement the European Quality Framework among a wide range of stakeholders, with the objectives to contribute to developments in the long-term care sector on political level, raise awareness amongst policy makers, use as a basis for developing training programmes and material and further develop quality management systems. The coalition will continue to meet after the end of the project and follow this up.

Sweden



Ola Nilsson, Swedish association for senior citizens, introduced the work of the Swedish WeDO coalition. The coalition developed a strategy around 5 items: Implement a person-centered approach; fight elder abuse, implement a partnership approach, give professional caregivers adequate opportunities and fight ageism.

The coalition developed an action plan including the use of the 15th June, World awareness day against elder abuse, as a milestone each year to raise awareness and develop activities targeting the Swedish parliament and unions. The coalition



developed working groups to produce a communications strategy and follow up activities. The coalition will continue after the project ends.

Czech Republic



Klara Cozlova, from Zivot 90, introduced the Czech national strategy. The coalition is composed of the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Interior (Criminality Prevention), Directors of Home for Seniors (Elišky Purkyňové, Sue Ryder, DS Háje), Social service providers level (home care services, institutional care services), a researcher from Charles University, councillors from various NGO (Czech Helsinki Committee, Spotřebitel, civic counselling) and representatives from local authorities (Prague, Mladá Boleslav, České Budějovice – South Bohemia). The coalition made an analysis of the situation of long-term care in Czech Republic and concluded that LTC is an undercovered topic, and that there is a need to raise public and professional awareness about the topic of LTC and elder abuse and create better conditions for older people by incorporating the quality principles and areas of action from the WeDO Quality framework into everyday practice. The coalition decided they will organize twice a year meetings and ad hoc meetings, that they will disseminate the WeDO project results (press release on 30/11/2012), systematically comment on draft laws regarding LTC in cooperation with Ministries and start debate about law covering specifically elder abuse to support legislative changes. The coalition will meet again in 2013 to measure the progress made.

Ireland



Anne Dempsey from Third AGE presented the Irish WeDO strategy. She reminded some figures; in Ireland, in a population of 4.7million people, over 400,000 are over 65. Just under 5% of these are in care homes. A minority of people living at home receive care from family or from professional carers. These older people are our particular focus in WeDO, as the home care situation in Ireland is largely unregulated. Elder abuse in Ireland is under-reported as elsewhere. Irish report by the National Centre for the Protection of Older People estimated that over 10,000 older people experienced abuse in 2009.

Ireland's coalition members are experts in the health, legal and social care area, committed to WeDO principles. The coalition established supportive links with the Office for Older People in the Department of Health. They contributed to overall philosophy of the 'European Quality Framework for Long-Term Care Services', and shared Good Practice examples. The coalition also agreed an Irish WeDO definition of elder abuse, benchmarked the Irish situation regarding national strategies, services, laws, statutes – and gaps. They met the Irish Minister for Older People to discuss the adoption of the 11 Quality Principles into the government's National Strategy on Older People due to be published in 2013. In the future, the Irish coalition will contribute to the Irish EU Presidency, will launch the WeDO Quality framework (January) at European Parliament Offices Dublin by Minister for Older People at the Department of Health. They will also seek funding to assist organisations to benchmark themselves against WeDO Quality Principles, and they will ask Irish key age sector organisations to benchmark their activities against WeDO Quality Principles. They will



be supported by the Irish Health Service Executive, as part of the Service Level Agreement.

She concluded by stating that the Irish WeDO coalition believes that in order to improve the well-being and dignity of older people in Ireland and to protect them from elder abuse, older people need to be empowered and protected to live full lives as actively engaged citizens, that their right to comprehensive high quality services, according to their changing needs, is secured through the development of appropriate and modern legislation, regulations and strategies which are effectively resourced and actively implemented.

Questions from the floor

Myrto Ranga from 50+ Hellas, Greece, thanked the European Parliament, European Commission and AGE platform Europe for enabling them to take part in projects like WeDO. The **Greek coalition** was also very active with the involvement of many different stakeholders. The national strategy will be launched during the Greek Gerontological Congress, and new organisations will take part to the coalition's work. The coalition will lobby to get an amendment of the Greek law to use the EU charter and the European quality framework as reference documents when a law is developed (including in health, employment, general affairs and human rights). Would it be possible to do the same at EU level?

Hildrun Sundseth, EU institute of Women's Health, mentioned the fact that women represent a large part in older people and in informal carers. They suffer a double discrimination (age and gender). How is this addressed in the WeDO project?

Jenny Billings, University of Kent, welcomed the WeDO project and this new movement to improve quality of life in care. Her university developed new systems model for LTC and

quality assurance models. They would very much like to include the European Quality framework in it, but from a bottom up approach. How can the European Quality framework be used to reach this objective? Is the development of 'implementation groups' possible?

Anne-Sophie Parent answered the first question by referring to the ongoing work developed by the United Nations and the Council of Europe on a convention for the rights of older people. We hope to include the EU charter and the European Quality framework as reference documents in it. She also answered the second question reminding that the gender dimension is highlighted in the WeDO project, including the gender income gap in old age that has an impact on the dignity of older women. . She concluded by explaining that now the partnership is opening up to new countries and new stakeholders. AGE will try to keep an active part in the follow up, will share information and invite stakeholders to use WeDO outcomes in their work at national and local level. Some AGE members are already translating the EU quality framework in their own language, and new national coalitions will be created. The common work will continue through a virtual network.

Panel discussion



Heinz Becker introduced the panelists on the topic of **'the European Quality Framework for Long-Term Care, its principles and guidelines for the dignity and wellbeing of older people in need of care and assistance'** and presented the apologies



of Stephen Barnett and Pascal Champvert who could unfortunately not take part in the panel discussion due to health reasons and to railway strike. The power point presentations are available online (see at the end of the report).

Maria-Iglesia Gomez, Head of Unit in DG SANCO (Health and consumers) started the panel discussion and explained that DG SANCO developed together with other DGs and stakeholders a European Innovation Partnership for Active and Healthy ageing (EIP AHA). The EIP objective is to find solutions on how to use the innovation potential in the EU to bring change and shift the ageing challenge into an opportunity for the upcoming 10-15 years in our society, and increase by 2 years the healthy life years indicator. Three pillars were identified: prevention, screening and early diagnosis, care and cure and independent living and active ageing. Six action groups were developed to work on these pillars: Improving prescriptions and adherence to treatment; better management of health: preventing falls; preventing functional decline & frailty; integrated care for chronic conditions, inc. telecare; ICT solutions for independent living & active ageing and age-friendly cities and environments. Many EU funding opportunities exist to support activities in the field of LTC, i.e. AAL programmes, the Joint Programme on Neurodegenerative Diseases, and the upcoming Horizon 2020 and the structural funds. The WeDO partnership should see how to use in the best possible way the opportunities offered by the EIP AHA to continue its work.

Davor Dominkus, Director General of the Slovene Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, explained that his ministry strongly



supported the WeDO project and Slovene coalition. The coalition is broad and has developed a plan for the next years, mainly on two items: awareness raising and bringing changes to institutional and organizational level. There is a high percentage of older people in Slovenia, which will become the fifth EU country in the percentage of older people in the general population. The WeDO project made a very interesting work, especially linking elder abuse prevention and quality of life of older people in need of care. The EU quality framework should be used in all strategic documents and plans of actions related to LTC. On the upcoming period in 2013-2020, the Slovene strategy is to identify where the principles are implemented already, to use the quality framework for the upcoming Act on LTC assurance and to develop a special act to fight and prevent elder abuse. WeDO is an excellent project which gathered many different stakeholders, the Slovene national coalition will continue its work.

Kai Leichsenring, European Centre for Social Welfare and Research, welcomed the existence of EU projects as a good way to exchange cultures and experiences. The WeDO



project goes a step further in LTC field. The word 'long-term care' as such was not an easy task to define, and to extend its definition to a broader approach, i.e. not only to residential care. The WeDO project is very good but still many things need to be done. The project's basis was on the fight against elder abuse, but it goes much wider than that. For examples it impact concrete situations such as staff reorganization in a care home to



change dinner time from 4 pm to 4.30. Migrant carers are not always involved in LTC decisions but they are a big part of it, especially in southern countries. A lot of good practices exist in the EU but still a lot needs to be done to develop a specific identity for LTC. Now the challenge is to scale up the project's results and develop further research to reflect on ways to show that implementing quality is possible.



Rob Anderson, Director at Eurofound and President of Eurocarers, focused his presentation on 4 items: 1) Action at EU level; 2) Involvement of social partners; 3) A more explicit mention to research; and 4) the Carers. Mr. Anderson welcomed the results of the WeDO project which explicitly mention as a key objective the support to informal carers, as well as the promotion of a partnership and participatory approach. At EU level, the increasing number of patients affected by Alzheimer disease is becoming a priority, as it challenges the sustainability of care. It is important to go beyond employment issues to develop social protection, equal opportunities and reconciliation between work and care. Support to informal carers is fundamental for the respect of dignity of older people. Research for a common analysis and vision is definitely needed.



Marjan Sedmak, AGE Platform Europe President, concluded the panel discussion stating that Europe needs to reconstruct welfare states; he mentioned a sentence from Pdt. Roosevelt 'Poor people are not free people'. We should use our imagination to implement now the WeDO quality framework. In Slovenia, the principles

have now become legislation, included in a long-term process. We need now to convince the organisations of mayors to work together to achieve good results. The Slovene coalition will also seek to address the gaps in legislation and use the WeDO quality framework as a reference document. Poor people lead to poor retired people and we should not leave eldercare activities only to families, but develop community-based care.

Questions from the floor

A question was raised on the **next steps of the EIP**. Ms. Iglesia Gomez answered that the current situation is experimental and a start. They will look at the results end of 2013 to decide how to continue. New members in action groups are welcome and the EIP already offers a long list of possible activities.

A remark was made on '**ageing in place**' movement challenging the availability of informal care and to have a sustainable system. There is a need for continuous support from professional carers. Mr. Anderson approved this remark and mentioned that informal carers are family and friends, and that older people need to get timely support. Informal care should be a choice, with real alternatives. Intermediate care and the role of care providers can be helpful.

Another question was raised on **respite care services**. Monika Wild explained that in Austria, there is a care allowance provided to older people which is used at 50% for informal carers, and at 50% for home care services (including counselling or day care centres). Marjan Sedmak added that we may need to reconsider the polarization between formal and informal care. We should better speak of 'qualified' care. Sari Jokinen, National Institute for Health and Welfare, explained that in Finland an experiment is being made with family carers. They sign a contract with the municipality, get a small allowance, support from care systems and



free days off during the month. The only problem is that the municipalities have to pay for the system so not all family carers can benefit from it.

Ms. Pijl, ANBO-NL, explained that in the Netherlands the government has **abolished the LTC insurance**. It is difficult to convince governments who only look for financial figures to decide.

Heinz Becker explained that in Austria there is now a representation of both youth and older people **civil society** representative imposed in federal law.

Mr. Lamura, INRCA-IT, added that the **value of care** has to be understood as part of the society. The achievements of WeDO will need to be measured systematically to support the implementation of the Quality framework and to monitor it.

Ms. Imbert, FNG-FR mentioned the activities of a project which will develop a 10 years **study on informal carers**.

Ms. Costis, Greece, added that the power is now in the financial system. EU institutions should impose a **regulation that prevents people to become vulnerable**. In Greece, there was a 60% reduction of pensions. Only the EU level can help to prevent this.



Conclusions

Heinz K. Becker concluded the conference stating that this is not the end of the project, but a start. The WeDO project provides tools to raise awareness and support of policy makers. Now organisations will have a key role to play in the next phase. The EY2012 was a great mean to raise awareness on the importance of active ageing and

intergenerational solidarity but missed activities on the 'culture' of ageing. A great challenge is also ahead concerning palliative care. He finally promoted the role of social entrepreneurship in driving social innovation in the current context.

Anne-Sophie Parent thanked Heinz Becker and the European Parliament for their support and all the speakers for their useful contributions to this final event. She also thanked the WeDO partners and stressed that they can count on AGE to continue to support them in their efforts to promote older people's wellbeing and dignity. She concluded thanking the participants for their interest in the WeDO project and encouraging them to stay in touch with the WeDO partnership through AGE and/or the coordinators of the national coalitions.

Davor Dominkus, Social Protection Committee sub-group on age, added that with his SPC colleagues, they will work on a LTC report to be launched in 2014. There are great differences between member states, and we need to increase the capacity to support independent living and secure the availability of LTC. Financial sustainability will also be a key issue. The SPC will be a place for exchange of knowledge between member states, and will seek the cooperation with AGE Platform Europe and the WeDO partnership. It is important to keep a good communication between policy makers and national coalitions.



Useful Links

- WeDO project website: www.wedo-partnership.eu
- Final conference's webpage (including pictures and presentations): www.wedo-partnership.eu/wedo-events
- European Quality framework for long-term care (long and short version): www.wedo-partnership.eu/european-quality-framework-long-term-care-services
- European Strategy for the wellbeing and dignity of older people in need of care: www.wedo-partnership.eu/system/files/Final%20EU%20strategy_without%20logos%26supp.pdf
- National strategies developed by the national coalitions: www.wedo-partnership.eu/system/files/Summary%20of%20national%20strategies.pdf
- List of partners in the WeDO project: www.wedo-partnership.eu/partner-list
- EUSTACEA project website (European Charter of the rights and responsibilities of older people in need of care and assistance): www.age-platform.eu/en/daphne
- AGE Platform Europe's press release on the event: <http://www.age-platform.eu/en/age-a-the-media/age-communication-to-the-media-press-releases/1569-eu-quality-framework-for-long-term-care-services-launched-today-in-the-european-parliament>

