



For the Wellbeing and Dignity of Older people



EU Strategy for the wellbeing and dignity of older people in need of care and assistance

This strategy was developed as a deliverable of the WeDO Project¹ (2010-2012) which aimed to set up a lasting and open European partnership of European, national and regional/local stakeholders committed to improving the quality of services for older people in need of care and assistance and to fight elder abuse. The main outcome of the WeDO project is the launch of an [EU Quality framework for long-term care services](http://wedo.ttp.eu/european-quality-framework-long-term-care-services)² which includes quality principles, areas of action and recommendations for implementation. This Quality framework is aimed at stakeholders at all levels (EU, national, local, regional) who would like to improve the quality of life of older people³ in need of care and assistance, support professional and informal carers and contribute to a more efficient long-term care system.

The European strategy was developed with the input of a European coalition composed of several key EU stakeholders⁴ and other EU stakeholders supporting our initiative. It outlines what can and should be done at EU level to promote the wellbeing and dignity of older people in need of care and assistance. Meanwhile the national strategies/work plans developed by national coalitions in 12 countries outline what can and should be done in these countries to achieve our common goal of promoting better quality of life for our ageing population and preventing elder abuse. These strategies aim at offering recommendations on how to better protect older people in need of care, an area which indeed requires more action.

More information at: www.wedo-partnership.eu.

Introduction

In the EPSCO conclusions of 21 June 2012, Member states agreed that *'The nature, scale and pace of demographic trends vary substantially from country to country and from region to region. There is no "one size fits all" policy response; however, in all cases the response will require governments, social partners, non-profit organisations and individual citizens to adapt and find new solutions.'* The Council invited the European Commission and Member States to *'take measures to develop policies for more integrated health and social care systems for older persons and persons in vulnerable situations'*.

The European Commission and Member States have to respond to current challenges with innovative, sustainable and cost-efficient solutions. This EU strategy targets a wide range of stakeholders: Directorate-Generals of the European Commission, EU agencies, the European Parliament, the Member states, local and regional actors.

We can and need to drive change through smart and inclusive health and social care systems reforms. **High quality care that promotes dignity contributes to improving the**

¹ www.wedo-partnership.eu

² <http://wedo.ttp.eu/european-quality-framework-long-term-care-services>

³ When using the term 'older people', this strategy refers to various groups including older migrants, older women and men, older LGBT, older Roma, etc.

⁴ <http://www.wedo-partnership.eu/partner/eu-coalition>

quality of life for those who receive care and assistance, to preventing elder abuse, to improving working conditions in the care sector as well as to enabling informal carers to reconcile work and family duties.

The EU and the Member States should also aim at creating conditions that allow both women and men to be informal carers if they so wish, while enjoying equal opportunities on the labour market: the current economic and social crisis has a detrimental impact on informal carers, as reductions in publicly supported eldercare is transferring the responsibility to care for older vulnerable people back to families. This trend affects women in particular due to traditional views on their role as family carers.

In its call for proposals that funded the WeDO project, the European Commission explains that: *“Elder abuse in institutional and domestic settings is increasingly being recognised as a major societal problem. There is a risk that this problem will grow as Member States experience rapidly ageing populations. It appears, however, that only in a minority of cases the abuse of older people does represent a deliberate attempt to harm or exploit the victims. [...] No single response will be sufficient to tackle the complex issue of elder abuse. Most Member States have yet to come up with a comprehensive strategy that could offer effective protection to the population of frail elderly people.”*

This European strategy seeks to contribute to the following EU policy processes:

- ➔ **The Europe 2020 strategy which includes** the objective to reach 75% employment rate across the EU by 2020.
- ➔ The implementation of the **UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities** and especially its article 16
- ➔ The **European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy ageing** and especially its two first objectives: enabling EU citizens to lead healthy, active and independent lives while ageing; and improving the sustainability and efficiency of social and health care systems;
- ➔ The **EU Strategy for Gender Equality**, which includes the key action to ‘assess remaining gaps in entitlement to family-related leave, notably paternity leave and carers’ leave’.
- ➔ The **European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020**, adopted in March 2011

This European strategy promotes **active ageing, age-friendly environments and social inclusion, innovation (including social innovation) as important success factors for improving the quality of life of Europe’s ageing population.** It should be **supported by an active participation of a wide range of stakeholders, including older people.**

We call on EU policy makers to act now and achieve by 2020:

1. **The adoption of a European Quality framework for long-term care**
2. **Age-friendly environments across the European Union**
3. **An EU legal and policy framework for the elimination of all forms of discrimination in care, including ageism and elder abuse**
4. **The promotion of adequate protection and support to older people in need of care, formal and informal carers and volunteers across the EU, including the smooth cross-border provision of services**

1. The adoption of a European Quality framework for long-term care

How?		By whom?
Develop and adopt a voluntary European Quality Framework for long-term care inspired by the WeDO quality principles and areas of action ⁵ . This should then be adopted by the EPSCO Council as a key element of their Active Ageing principles and legacy of the European Year on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.	→	DG EMPL, SPC, EPSCO
Include a clear reference to the European Quality framework for long-term care in the upcoming European Commission communication on long-term care. This communication should make recommendations to member states, including measures to protect vulnerable older people, prevent and fight elder abuse, promote the role of case/care managers, support formal and informal carers, support volunteers involved in LTC activities, improve the links between formal and informal care, develop specific training programmes for care staff, etc.	→	DG EMPL
The WeDO quality principles should be used in the future in the framework of the National Social Reports to report on the extent to which the existing national long-term care services respect these principles.	→	National governments and SPC
Support the appropriate authorities in member states to develop outcome-oriented standards for LTC in line with the European quality framework for LTC	→	DG EMPL
Initiate peer reviews and thematic seminars on a regular basis on the issue of quality of long-term care and the fight against elder abuse to enable exchange of experience and good practice on how to implement the European Quality framework for LTC services in the different member states and for the different target groups.	→	DG EMPL

⁵ See the EU Quality framework for long-term care services summary attached to this strategy

2. Age-friendly friendly environments across the European Union

How?		By who?
<p>Support the creation of an age-friendly environment network and the launch of a EU Covenant on Demographic change to enable older people in need of care and assistance to live at home and independently for much longer. This should be developed with the active participation of older people themselves: a strong support to the empowerment of older people by the creation of a 'Seniors for Innovation' programme would offer new ways to involve senior citizens directly in local/regional/national/European initiatives on age-friendly environments.</p>	→	<p>All DGs, lead by DG EMPL and DG JUST- active role of the Committee of the Regions and of the WHO</p>
<p>The Economic Policy Committee (EPC) Working Group on Ageing Populations and Sustainability (AWG) should work with the Social Protection Committee Working group on ageing (SPC WG AGE) to agree how to ensure the financial sustainability of long-term care systems while guaranteeing quality of life (linked to the adoption of an EU quality framework for LTC, see Recommendation 3).</p>	→	<p>EPC and SPC</p>
<p>Support the adaptation of living and working environments to the needs of our ageing population with a strong and legally binding European Accessibility Act to improve accessibility to goods and services in particular transport, housing and ICT. A binding EU legislation should be launched to ensure that public websites and websites delivering basic services of public interest are made accessible by 2015.</p>	→	<p>DG JUST and DG CONNECT</p>
<p>Use structural funds to achieve an age-friendly EU: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) should be used to support innovative cost efficient and evidence based solutions for independent living at home or in the community (housing, accessibility, public transport, access to services in rural areas, etc.). The ERDF should also be used to encourage local and regional authorities to develop services and provisions that address the needs of informal carers such as day care for older people and respite care facilities. The European Social Fund should be used to train professionals and support informal carers and improve gender equality (including reconciling work and family life).</p>	→	<p>DG REGIO, DG EMPL – and included in the financial perspectives for 2014-2020</p>
<p>Take the necessary measures so that the concept of Design for all is applied not only in ICT but also in all living and working environments across the EU and include it in the upcoming EU Accessibility Act.</p>	→	<p>DG JUST to coordinate and apply to all DGs</p>

3. An EU legal and policy framework for the elimination of all forms of discrimination in care, including ageism, and measures to prevent and fight abuse

3.1. Fight against discrimination in care and health inequalities

How?		By who?
Speed up work and adopt the draft directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation or identity to ensure that older people will be protected against age discrimination in all areas covered by the proposed directive, including access to preventive and curative health and long-term care.	→	Council
Develop ‘Health in all policies’ and promote an adequate level of investment in health promotion and disease prevention	→	DG SANCO

3.2. Prevent and fight elder abuse in care

How?		By who?
Develop a study at EU level to establish a common definition of elder abuse inspired from the WHO definition, to measure the prevalence of elder abuse and the risk factors in all member states (supported by EU research funds related to healthy ageing), This should be based on gender-disaggregated data, and identify useful prevention and intervention policies and protection framework. It might require the development of an ‘impact assessment methodology’ to measure the effectiveness of different interventions.	→	DG EMPL
Support awareness campaigns across the EU to promote a more positive image of older people and to fight elder abuse, as a follow up of the European Year 2012 on active ageing and solidarity between generations	→	DG COMM
Include fight against elder abuse in the work priorities of the new Rights and Citizenship Programme to support stakeholders working in this area (as was the case of DAPHNE programmes) and continue to use the Daphne III programme to increase awareness and develop adequate tools to fight elder abuse in 2013	→	DG JUST
Establish better coordination between member states justice systems and police records to prevent staff who have been convicted of elder abuse in a country to move and seek work as a carer in another member state	→	DG JUST
Include ‘elder abuse’ as a research topic in the JPND to measure its prevalence and impact on people with dementia, to be able to draw recommendations on how to prevent it based on best practice across the EU.	→	EU Joint Programme – Neurodegenerative diseases Executive Board

4. Promotion of adequate protection and support for older people in need of care, informal and formal carers and volunteers across the EU, including the smooth cross-border provision of care services

4.1. Older people

How?		By who?
The EU should adopt a constructive approach in the UN open ended working group on older people's rights and the UN debate on the development of a UN convention on the rights of older people	→	DG JUST, EAS
Promote among EU member states accessible LTC services, access to social security, adequate pensions, essential services (e.g. healthcare and housing) and education for older people; ensure that all older people, including those with chronic diseases, will continue to have access to the care they need without falling into poverty and to live in dignity (principle of universal access)	→	DG EMPL coordinator for all DGs, EPAPSE, Council
Promote a participatory approach to increase the active involvement of older people in EU projects , including in life long-learning programmes, the upcoming Rights and citizenship programme, in Research programmes and other relevant programmes for older people ⁶ ; build on the results of existing projects to improve participation of older people.	→	DG EAC, DG JUST, DG RTD
Use the European Charter of the rights and responsibilities of older people in need of long-term care and assistance developed by the EUSTACEA project ⁷ as a start for all EU initiatives concerning older people in need of care and assistance, so that ethical issues are at the center of all related EU policies and funding programmes	→	DG SANCO, DG EMPL, DG RTD
Tackle roots of health inequalities to improve healthy ageing and well-being among older women and men, including in the field of mental health.	→	DG SANCO and DG EMPL
Work on a proposal for a Directive on a minimum income.	→	Council

⁶ See AGE's publication 'How to support active ageing in Europe – Support to local and regional actors' http://www.age-platform.eu/images/stories/EN/brochure_activeageing_en.pdf

⁷ See the EUSTACEA project (cofunded by the DAPHNE programme) on www.age-platform.eu/en/daphne

4.2. Informal carers

How?		By who?
Table an EU directive on carers' leave and adopt it	→	DG EMPL Council SPC, Social dialogue
Organise a debate involving a wide range of stakeholders and promote exchange of good practices on support to informal carers; develop EU recommendations for adequate, sustainable and innovative solutions enabling a better reconciliation of work and family life (e.g. carers' allowance), decreasing the risks of burnout (e.g. community-based day eldercare, respite care services, counselling and psychological support services and home care) and providing better skills and support services development to informal carers . These recommendations should be developed in a broader perspective of gender equality.	→	DG EMPL, DG JUST, DG REGIO, Committee of the regions
Launch a European Year 2015 on violence against women , including specific measures to protect informal carers who are mostly women	→	DG JUST
Encourage and support local and regional authorities provide accurate and up to date information on how and where to find suitable and timely care solutions, respite care facilities, training and information on carers' rights, counselling services, etc. (e.g. through exchange of good practices, continuing the work done by the WeDO project).	→	DG EMPL, DG REGIO, Committee of the regions

4.3. Migrant carers

How?		By who?
Promote measures that support carers migrating from non-EU countries and protect their right to equal treatment with EU-countries' carers, that recognize their work and skills, and that provide them with adequate care skills and language training programmes, access to health care, social support and portability of benefits. This should go in hand with promoting schemes to legalise care work for both EU and non-EU migrants while taking into account the causes of illegal care work (lack of affordable care, complex administrative procedures, social acceptability)	→	DG EAC, DG EMPL, DG JUST
Raise awareness of the situation of migrant carers working in private households, and the need at national level to ensure them adequate protection, including for undocumented migrant carers and migrant women whose permit to reside stems from a family reunion framework	→	DG HOME, DG JUST, and DG EMPL, Council and member states, regional authorities

4.4. Professional carers and healthcare professionals

How?		By who?
Include in the revised Directive 2005/36/EC an EU-wide recognition of qualifications for eldercare to facilitate care professionals and care assistants' cross-border mobility and of a "geriatric" specialization for healthcare professionals (e.g. nurses, doctors) and care assistants (incl. skills in management of complex needs such as dementia care, disability and mental health)	→	DG EAC, DG EMPL, CEDEFOP, DG MARKT
Disseminate and use the results from relevant EU projects to enable all carers to receive e-training programmes and to validate their skills (including separate modules for professional and informal carers and a module on how to detect and fight elder abuse). Use the European Social Fund to apply training modules to support carers' work	→	DG EAC, DG EMPL, CEDEFOP
Create and promote new job profiles and qualifications for the LTC sector in a way that allows professional carers' mobility between care sectors, i.e. between child, elder and disability care as well as between countries, and that focuses on needs of service users. This includes the development of social skills and specific skills such as networking, the use of ICT and assistive technologies, ethical issues, case and care management, dementia care, everyday-life assistance etc.	→	DG EAC, DG EMPL, CEDEFOP, RTD, DG CONNECT

4.5. Volunteers

How?		By who?
The European Parliament should adopt the Intergroup on Ageing's resolution on the importance of involving older people in volunteering activities	→	European Parliament
The EC should table an initiative on volunteering , mentioning both the importance of an active role for volunteers of all ages, and the value of the work done by volunteers in the care field, for ex. in fighting social isolation or contributing to solidarity between generations, and include older volunteers in the Erasmus for all initiative.	→	DG EMPL

4.6. Cross-border care services

How?		By who?
Develop an EU framework of voluntary standards for LTC , as part of the on-going debate on standards for services in social and health care, to ensure adequate protection of vulnerable consumers and users and of professional carers across the EU and raise quality of cross-border provision of LTC.	→	DG EMPL and standardization bodies
Create an EU portal with up-to-date information on users' and consumers' rights and existing protection measures both for older people in need of care and assistance and for professional carers, engaged in cross-border care service provision.	→	DG SANCO, DG EMPL, DG MARKT



Let's join forces for the wellbeing and dignity of older people in need of care and assistance; together, We can DO more!

The WeDO partnership is an EU-wide community of stakeholders committed to improve quality of life for older people in need of care and assistance. They developed together a European Quality framework for long-term care services (see www.wedo-partnership.eu).

The WeDO partnership is an excellent opportunity to share experiences, get access to innovative ideas. Take part to the European Partnership for the wellbeing and dignity of older people to benefit from each other's experiences and initiatives, commit to action and share with us the progress you made, **get involved!**

The WeDO partnership at EU level aims to:

- Disseminate the EU quality framework for long-term care and encourage relevant stakeholders to use it
- Monitor progress on the different objectives of the EU strategy for the wellbeing and dignity of older people
- Gather more supporters to the EU strategy