



Preventing abuse and neglect of older persons in Europe

Symposium in Brussels, 17–18 June 2013

The symposium on preventing abuse and neglect of older persons in Europe was the first event organized by the OHCHR Regional Office for Europe jointly with the European Commission (DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion). The symposium's main target audience was composed of Member State representatives, representatives of the European Union institutions (European Commission, European Parliament), civil society organizations and academics as well as representatives of other international and regional organizations. Prof. Schlüter took part in the event as an expert for the E.D.E., and spoke with many government representatives and members of NGOs from Austria, Luxembourg, Slovenia, the Netherlands and Switzerland, among other countries.

The main aim of the symposium was to bring a rights-based perspective to the policies concerning older persons – in particular policies on long-term care – which are being developed by the Member States of the European Union with the support of the European Commission.



Prof. Dr. Wilfried Schlüter, E.D.E.'s representative in Brussels

In the context of demographic changes, the symposium's participants highlighted the need to ensure that older persons will live in dignity, free from abuse or neglect. Although economic issues are undoubtedly important, the differences found in the care practice (institutional or within care-communities) between good and bad services were not at all linked to budgets of the organizations, but to their ethos and values. Human rights-based analysis have displayed problems across the care sector which were partly attributable to under-staffing or under-resourcing, but also to the absence of a human rights framework (older persons perceived as

“care recipients”, not rights-holders), absence of human rights-respectful operational protocols and also some regulatory gaps, e.g., absence of legal definition of “restraint”.

Especially within the institutional care many issues of serious concern have been brought into focus, e.g.:

- lack of activities (or else activities once a week) and lack of human contact, loneliness;
- lack of availability of staff to accompany older persons to the toilet;

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Tallinn, 26 – 28 September 2013

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- serious deficiencies in access to food and drinking, sometimes with all three meals daily provided within a few hours of each other (to fit the needs of the organization, not the older persons themselves), followed by lengthy periods of no access to food;
- “sophisticated” use of restraints such as blocking older persons' mobility by tables or restricting access to Zimmer frames; etc.

During the discussions it became clear that older persons, similar to persons with disability, are often treated (and forgotten) as objects of care and pity rather than as subjects with their own will and preference, with their own personal goals and with equal humanity. Only few countries have data on falls and related fractures, weight loss, medication, depression or bed sores (pressure ulcers). Where data do exist, they paint a mixed picture – e.g., in several countries bed sores seem to be decreasing in inpatient care but increasing in home care – and most of the data available appear to be clinical rather than related to quality of life, though there is increasing discussion about the right focus of measurement.

Prof. Schlüter was particularly alarmed by the statement of one speaker, who remarked that violence takes place not only in Guantánamo but also in care homes. For such attitudes to change, apart from intensive publicity work what is needed in Prof. Schlüter's view is the ongoing professionalisation of care home staff and management, as well as financial and personnel commitments by the governments of the member countries.

For Prof. Schlüter, a convention on human rights for the elderly is absolutely necessary. The advantages of such a convention can be seen in the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Currently, for example, much discussion is being devoted to the “inclusion” of persons with disabilities, and

E.D.E. Vision 33

This is the 33th issue of the newsletter. E.D.E. VISION. It will inform you about current developments in the field of long-term care services for the elderly in Europe as well as about projects of the E.D.E. and its member associations. The E.D.E. will also give its views on current questions of European policy in the context of long-term care.

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measures for the Europe-wide implementation of such inclusion are already being put in place. Apart from these conventions, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), among others, serve as bases for a convention on the human rights of the elderly.

During discussions on the need for a human rights convention for the elderly, differences in terms of position became clear. The majority of governments in the EU member states have no wish for such a convention. Positive voices came above all from civil organisations.

Anne-Sophie Parent, Secretary General of AGE Platform Europe, was a particularly strong advocate. In her remarks she pointed to the results of the projects WeDO and EUSTACEA: **European Quality Framework for long-term care** (<http://wedo.ttp.eu/european-quality-framework-long-term-care-services>) **European Charter of rights and responsibilities of older people in need of long-term care and assistance** (<http://www.age-platform.eu/age-projects/previous-projects/1676-daphne-2>), which the E.D.E. helped to create under the leadership of Angela Cluzel). Both documents serve to promote the rights of the elderly.

■ E.D.E.

Croatian Association of Social Service, a new member of the E.D.E.

Established in February 2003, the Croatian Association of Social Service Directors (Udruga Ravnateljica u Djelatnosti Socijalne Skrbi, www.urss.hr) is divided into four branches located in Zagreb, Rijeka, Osijek and Split. With over 80 members, the Association has as its mission to encourage the development of standards of social services in governmental and non-governmental sectors, to promote the drafting of laws and regulations, to encourage the development of a network of social service providers, to establish a code of ethics and to develop continuing education and advanced training for social service directors with an eye to enhancing management structures in care homes.

As such, the main objectives of the Association are to encourage directors of social service activities to promote mutual professional and social interests, to foster the flow of information to all service providers, to organise cultural activities such as exhibitions, concerts and fairs, and to improve the working conditions of all those active in the sector. Moreover we strive to de-institutionalise and transform nursing homes for the elderly while improving the quality of life. Further aims include opening the Croatian market to EU investors willing to modernise and restructure facilities for the elderly. This includes developing nursing facilities for Croatians as well as for an ageing EU population.

In future, the Croatian Association of Social Service Directors plans to improve the quality of care services countrywide, and to revive membership in our Osijek branch. Joint ventures with similar European associations are under review, with a view to developing a lucrative Croatian market for European social service and residential care needs. Among other initiatives this will involve applying for European cohesion and structural funds together with sister associations and assessing credit options for very small, small and medium-sized social enterprises. In general, focus will be placed on mobilising private capital for the public good.

We are delighted that the E.D.E. board members saw fit to invite the Croatian Association of Social Service Directors to join the E.D.E. family at their recent meeting in Belgrade. Here's to a lasting and fruitful cooperation!



■ Mladen Pavić,
Chairman of the Croatian Association of Social Service
Directors

Belgian Association ADMR joins the E.D.E.

During the meeting of the General Board of the E.D.E. in Belgrade on 13 April 2013, the Belgian association ADMR was admitted to the family of the European Association for Directors of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly.

The ADMR (Association of Directors of Care Homes in the Walloon Region) is a pluralist association of natural persons who are interested, either on a professional or a private basis, in issues of gerontology and geriatrics. In short, of all those who in one way or another take care of establishments for the elderly. Its members come from all sectors: public, voluntary and commercial.

The association was founded in 1986. It is represented on several bodies and principally organises training courses or seminars for

care home directors as well as administrative, catering and care staff. In general these sessions deal with practice-related topics.

The association's contacts and exchanges take place notably with colleagues from France, French-Speaking Switzerland and Luxembourg.



The website www.admr-asbl.eu introduces the association, its organisation and its aims. An archive gives access to most of the texts, documents and speeches presented at the seminars and training courses.

■ Jean Liégeois, Vice-President of the ADMR

Conference of E.D.E.-accredited educational institutes on 20 June 2013 in Graz

The conference of E.D.E.-accredited educational institutes from Austria, Germany and Italy took place in the Austrian city of Graz on 20 June 2013. Hosted by the training institute "Primavera Veränderungsmanagement", the conference was led by the E.D.E.'s education officer Prof. Wilfried Schlüter. The Bundesverband der Alten- und Pflegeheime Österreichs (Austrian Association of Retirement and Nursing Homes), which is actively involved in shaping the E.D.E.'s cooperation in the area of continuing education and advanced training, was represented by Edgar Führer and Martin König. Beatrix Kaserer, Chair of the Berufsgemeinschaft der Führungskräfte in der Altenbetreuung in Südtirol (Professional Community of Care Home Directors in South Tyrol), was also present.



Participants at the conference reported on the focus of current curricula, measures for ensuring quality and general developments at their technical universities and training institutes. In general it was emphasised that the growing demands on those employed in the care sector must be borne in mind during training periods. The growing need for practice-oriented training for care home directors was recognised, and is reflected in the fact that those being trained are given intensive supervision through internships and change projects. In addition it was reported that continuing education and advanced training focus increasingly on professional values and operational procedures, working environments and the individual behaviour of care home directors. Moreover, the trainers make it their job to sensitise future care home directors to the need for an adequate distribution of their own resources, intense self-reflection and networking methods.

During discussions on the profession of care home director, the question arose of the image of care home directors in the E.D.E. and the member associations. The E.D.E. plans to carry out a survey on this subject among the member associations in the near future.

■ E.D.E.

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20 Years of ARGE NÖ Heime



The Working Group of Lower Austrian Care Homes (ARGE NÖ Heime) is celebrating its 20th anniversary!

Certainly, the success of ARGE NÖ Heime is reflected in the inspiring number of initiatives and projects as well as the impressive developments made by the Lower Austrian care homes in the last two decades. Because our working group has always been an innovative force, seeking close cooperation with its various stakeholders. No doubt the key reason for this success has been our ability to bring together the diverse interests represented by the pension insurance institutions, politicians, businesses, professional and volunteer care staff, family members and care recipients etc., while retaining a neutral position and seeking a balance of interests for the benefit of the residents.

If change does not come about on an ongoing basis, the risk of shocks and breakdowns increases. For that reason stability is equally important as vision, flexibility and development. The founding objectives of ARGE NÖ Heime have remained stable, and will continue to do so. Our founders saw themselves as lobbyists for the homes and the elderly people they cared for. Until today ARGE NÖ works as a mouthpiece for those in need of care. We have not diverged from our path. But the question remains: what does the future hold in store, and where can change take place? The quality management system E-Qalin® is an impetus for our homes to develop into learning organisations. Demographic developments and the growing, multi-



faceted needs of an ageing society have a decisive hand in the innovativeness of ARGE NÖ Heime and the homes it represents. We are in the process of developing into centres of excellence in all fields of care. In the interests of quality ageing in Lower Austria.

■ Anton Kellner,
MBA, Chairman of ARGE NÖ Heime

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LET'S NETWORK OUR CARE! TECHNOLOGY IN CARE – OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITS

What are the opportunities and what are the limits in implementing technology in long-term care? What approaches currently exist and how helpful are they? How important is networking for our services? And what legal and ethical questions arise with the use of technical assistance systems in the care sector?

The aim of our Congress is to inform participants about current developments in the area of technical assistance systems, and to bring them up to date on the possibilities and limits of their implementation in long-term care services.

We look forward to welcoming you to Tallinn on 26 September 2013.

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FESTIVAL ON ALL FLOORS

After the success of the “chamber theatre” – with theatrical pieces played out in various rooms – the most recent challenge at the Fondation Mont-Calme has been to transform the entire facility into concert halls for two days.

The Fondation Mont-Calme, situated in the heart of Lausanne in Switzerland, is a care home for elderly people in need of daily assistance. Convinced that creativity remains an incomparable source of personal development for everyone and at every age, for more than twenty years it has offered permanent workshops to all of its residents, conducted by professional artists. In these privileged encounters, the “old folks” – who are all too often merely considered care recipients – become formidable creators, capable of exhibiting artworks, acting and playing music with compelling riffs. After the successful chamber theatre experience, the inauguration of a new space for relaxation and well-being, baptised “Agena”, served as a pretext for the creation of an in-house music festival, certainly one of the first of its kind.



Working together, the musician and music therapist Anne-Laure Murer and the actor Vincent David have defied all the rules and allowed both residents and visitors to discover new, unexpected venues for concerts and musical performances.

When they got out of bed on Friday, on 16 November last year – one of those cold and misty autumn mornings – or even in the wee hours of the morning, the residents saw troupes of musicians disembark in their rooms, playing, singing and dancing at the foot of their bed or around the breakfast table. A contagious sense of joy rapidly overcame everyone on the premises. That’s how the first day of the festival started, which was dedicated solely to the residents. As the hours passed, the musical moments moved from room to room, including of course the Agena space, where residents were invited to relax while discovering the intense vibrations emitted by Tibetan bowls. To bring the day to a close they elected to watch – or rather rediscover – the famous musical comedy “Singing’ in the Rain”.

Then Saturday was open house, with several hundred people strolling around the home from one spectacle to the next. A cello improvisation in the laundry or a drum solo accompanied by the recorded voices of elderly people tickled everyone’s fancy. But these weren’t the last of the surprises: soon the audiences were making body music themselves, conducted by a Brazilian master, or were suddenly privy to the magnificent voice of a singer dressed as a cleaning lady, pushing a cart down the hall. And those with a penchant for creativity could engage in the fine arts and sketch to the sound of a lively duo of French singers.



As the hours passed, the various music genres moved the audiences of all ages, shaking the walls of the home and giving rise to shared intense moments with the residents. Here a child pressed up against the arm of a wheelchair, fascinated by a gospel song; there a woman with Alzheimer’s tapped her body to create the sounds of Brazilian music. Just a few moments among many that will remain firmly in the memories of those

present. These days are certainly a new type of event, a novel and successful way to share all the life in a home such as ours with the broader community.

All that remains is to invite those interested to come visit us at the same time next year, when our festival will focus on the even more daring theme of dance, giving both young bodies and old the chance to move and shake. For more information on activities and workshops at the Fondation Mont-Calme www.vivre-vivre.ch.



■ Jérôme Azau,
director of the Fondation Mont-Calme in Lausanne
(Switzerland)