

EUROPEAN CHARTER OF THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE ACCOMMODATED IN HOMES

Preamble

We declare that the rights and freedoms of elderly people are in no way reduced on entering a home.

We confirm our solemn duty to respect and protect the rights and freedoms of the elderly, as they are the expression of the autonomy of elderly citizens.

We consider that the fundamental principles of human rights apply for people of all ages, irrespective of their state of mental or physical health, social situation, level of income or education.

We undertake to protect elderly people against any infringement of these fundamental principles.

We are convinced that a common European gerontological policy must in future encompass four areas:

- Respect for the quality of life
- Adequacy of services
- Decent care and supervision
- Financing.

The E.D.E., the constituent national care home directors' associations and each of the member directors and providers adopt this Charter and declare they will respect it and commit themselves to upholding its tenets. This includes:

- respecting the principles of human rights in care homes
- promoting a common European gerontological policy.

Section I – Quality of life

1. We undertake to establish a high quality of life in care homes and to develop corresponding standards, and to reduce to the extent possible the unavoidable constraints associated with communal living.

2. We undertake to preserve the independence of elderly people as long as possible, to promote the expression of their free will, and to enable them to make good use of their capacities. This includes respecting their personal responsibility and freedom of choice.

3. We recognise that all elderly people have the right to housing, and ensure that life in a care home offers them the same security as living at home.

4. We respect elderly people's right to privacy, and guarantee their personal free space.

5. We respect the right of the elderly to control their own affairs, regardless of their level of disablement.

6. We respect the right of the elderly to take personal risks and to assume responsibility for them, regardless of their level of disablement.

7. We support the social role of the elderly and encourage contact with family, friends and surroundings. We facilitate access to external activities and make other activities available as required.

8. We encourage elderly people and their families to assume responsibility and exercise it to the benefit of all.

9. We respect the rights and freedoms of the elderly, as they have the same rights and freedoms as other citizens.

Section II – Services

10. We believe it is indispensable that a European gerontological policy should offer professionally qualified and up to date solutions allowing homes to respond to the wishes and needs of the elderly in due consideration of their state of health, so as to lastingly contribute to the independence of elderly people living in homes.

11. We consider a home for the elderly to be a collection of varied services offered to elderly people, which are freely available according to their choice.

12. We undertake to ensure that the offer of services shall be as comprehensive as possible and shall never be withdrawn.

13. We undertake to monitor as often as possible the quality of services offered to elderly people accommodated in homes and to adapt them continually according to their wishes and requirements.

14. We undertake to provide elderly people with clear, objective information concerning the availability of services within as well as outside of homes. We aspire to explain and link the entire spectrum of services available, as well as to orient these services to the needs of the elderly.

15. The national associations of care home directors belonging to the E.D.E. undertake to draw up resident's contracts in our countries in accordance with the principles in this Charter, which may then be integrated into national regulations and laws on care homes and their residents.

Section III – Care and supervision

16. We undertake to guarantee extensive care and supervision from the moment a person moves into our facilities. This includes comprehensive medical care without any form of discrimination.

17. We guarantee to provide elderly people living in homes on a permanent basis with the best care and supervision commensurate to their state of health.

18. We endeavour to provide elderly people with a social environment, and to care for them with competent and well-qualified staff capable of dealing equally well with medical and care-related problems as with problems of aging and disablement.

19. We expect that emphasis will be placed in all countries represented by the E.D.E. on improving the professional image of those who work for and with elderly people, and on recognising their professional competence.

20. We undertake to develop and optimise the training possibilities for staff charged with care and supervision. In particular the E.D.E. undertakes to further harmonise national qualification standards.

21. We wish to help the profession of director of care home or care service benefit from higher qualification standards, and to raise the esteem for these qualifications across Europe.

Section IV – Financing

22. We are committed to adequate financing for a future common European gerontological policy.

23. We express the wish that the cost of services offered in homes should remain affordable, so that all elderly people may benefit from dignified care and supervision.

24. We express the wish that elderly people should have decent and sufficient resources and that they should be allowed to manage them for as long as possible, in accordance with their degree of autonomy.

25. We expect that social and financial aid will be allocated effectively to the elderly, without discrimination regarding their origin or the type of aid.

26. We propose that a European gerontological policy should in future form an important basis for financial and social policy in all countries of Europe, in the interest of European society and common progress.

27. We maintain that this European gerontological policy will simplify, centralise and co-ordinate aid to elderly and disabled people.

28. We undertake to counter attempts to diminish the importance of the care home as an institution, and to oppose administrative restrictions which will inevitably create inequalities in the care and supervision of elderly people.

29. We express the wish that financing will in the long run be oriented to the development and enhancement of services.

30. We view ourselves as the agents of a responsible gerontology. For this reason we stand for adequate financing and a high-quality common European gerontological policy.

September 2010