



Special Briefing November 2012:

The European Quality framework for long-term care services

By **Maude Luherne**, WeDO Project Coordinator



For the Wellbeing and Dignity of Older people

On 14 November 2012, AGE Platform Europe together with 18 partners from 12 European countries launched in the European Parliament the [European Quality framework for long-term care services](#). This document is one of the main results from **the WeDO Project, a European Partnership for the wellbeing and dignity of older people (2010-2012)**, awarded by the European Commission DG EMPL call for proposal for a pilot project on preventing elder abuse. The project builds on the results from the EUSTACEA project (2008-2010) which developed a [European Charter of the rights and responsibilities of older people in need of care and assistance](#).

Challenges for quality long-term care in the EU

One of the key challenges for Europe is to transform the longer life expectancy into longer active and healthy life years. It is also to ensure that our ageing population will receive the care and assistance they need to age in dignity and be protected from elder abuse. In the last few years the fight against elder abuse and the improvement of the life and care quality of older people have gained importance at international and European level with the support of several EU Presidencies, the European Parliament and the European Commission. Answering a call for proposals from DG Employment and Social affairs on 'Preventing Elder abuse' in 2010, AGE and 18 partners were involved in the development of the WeDO project.

The EU Quality framework for long-term care services (EQFL) states that '**ensuring high quality and dignity in care should contribute to improving the quality of life for all older people receiving care and assistance and to preventing elder abuse**. We can and need to develop care models that are socially and financially sustainable in the long term and fair to all generations and social groups. All relevant stakeholders i.e. public authorities, service providers, older people's and carers' organisations, funders, need to be responsive, proactive, and innovative. They need to be aware of existing practices which offer older people high quality social and long-term care services while improving their cost efficiency.'

Introduction to the EU quality framework for long-term care services

Based on a common vision and analysis of long-term care services throughout Europe among the project partners, the EQFL get inspired from the Social Protection Committee 'voluntary quality framework for social services' and proposes **11 quality principles and 7 areas of actions** where quality of long-term care services can be improved. For each of them, an explanation ('What does it mean?') and a case example from different EU countries is provided. **Guidelines**



for implementation, including recommendations and examples for quality tools, as well as a methodology to develop a participatory approach in improving quality long-term care are provided in the second part. Finally, a list of 28 good practices and useful resources is available in the end.

The Quality framework is available in 10 languages in [its longer version](#) (48 pages) and in 12 languages in its [shorter version](#) (4 pages). [More information here.](#)

The WeDO EU partnership for the dignity and wellbeing for older people in need of care and assistance

The WeDO project was developed with the active involvement of 18 partners working with **12 national coalitions**, one in each partner country. The success of the WeDO project can be explained by the active participation of these coalitions which gathered a wide range of stakeholders: older people organisations, service providers, carers' organisations, local and national policy makers, research centers, etc. The coalitions actively worked on the different draft versions of the EU quality framework for long-term care services, gathered good and bad practices in their countries, and reflected together on how to improve the situation of long-term care in their country with the development of a national strategy to be developed after the end of the project. All the **national strategies** [are available here](#). Some countries already used the WeDO EU quality framework at national level:

- In Slovenia, the EU quality framework for long-term care services and the European Charter for the rights and responsibilities of older people in need of long-term care and assistance are used as reference documents in care workers contracts
- In Sweden, the EQFL was used to inspire the ongoing reform on long-term care

At EU level, a pool of EU-wide organisations gathered in an EU coalition which contributed to the EQFL and developed an **EU strategy for the wellbeing and dignity of older people**, [available here](#).



A successful final conference in the European Parliament on 14 November 2012

The [conference](#), which gathered around 120 participants, aimed at presenting the outcome of the WeDO project, i.e. the EU quality framework and the EU partnership. It was chaired and hosted by Mr. Heinz K. Becker, MEP and Co-Chair of the European Parliament Intergroup on Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

The Opening session was a good opportunity to gather the views from high level stakeholders at EU policy level. **Mr. Von**

Nordheim, DG EMPL, welcomed the very good results from the WeDO project, speaking of 'state of the art' in the field, and appreciated the continuity of the partnership after the end of the project. **Ms. Papamichalopoulou**, DG JUST, mentioned the upcoming Eurobarometer on discrimination and indicated that age discrimination is becoming a key priority for the EC. **Mr. Toomey**, Irish Coordinator of the European Year 2012 and representative of the Irish Presidency, added that the EU quality framework will be a reference document in all policy work regarding long-term care in Ireland.

Anne-Sophie Parent, AGE Secretary-General, presented the EU quality framework to the participants. Her presentation was completed with 5 examples of national strategies in Belgium, Austria, Ireland, Czech Republic and Sweden.

The panel discussion aimed at treating different aspects of the implementation of the EU quality framework. **Ms. Iglesia Gomez**, DG SANCO, insisted on the link to be made between the WeDO Project results and the European Innovation Partnership on Active and healthy ageing. **Mr. Dominkus**, Director General of the Slovene Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, gave the example of implementation of the quality framework in Slovenia and stated that the document will be useful for upcoming legislation in Slovenia on quality long-term care and the fight against elder abuse. **Mr. Leichsenring**, European Centre for Social Welfare and Research, linked the WeDO results to the results of the Interlinks project on the specific item on the 'identity of long-term care' and provided recommendations for the implementation of the Quality framework. **Mr. Anderson**, Eurofound and Eurocarers, welcomed the high recognition in the quality framework of the role of informal carers adding several challenges: the sustainability of the LTC system, the need to include social partners.

Finally, **Mr. Sedmak**, AGE President and Slovene partner in the WeDO project, completed the presentations by insisting on the need to reconstruct welfare states. In Slovenia, the challenge is to gather the organisations of Mayors and work together to implement the EU quality framework. The questions from the participants raised a number of issues regarding the follow-up of the work, the need to work on palliative care, the challenge of the current austerity measures and the gender inequalities.

Mr Heinz K. Becker concluded on the need to support social entrepreneurship to drive change and let **Mr. Dominkus**, member of the SPC sub working group on ageing, explain that the Social Protection Committee sub-group on ageing will develop a report on LTC by 2014 and will get inspiration from the WeDO EU quality framework and will cooperate with AGE Platform Europe.

A [press release](#) was sent by AGE on 14 November. All the presentations and documents of the event (and the upcoming conference report) are [available here](#).

Join the WeDO EU partnership!

All the organisations, whether involved in the national and EU coalitions or not, are now invited to continue to contribute to the WeDO EU partnership, which will open to new organisations and new countries. On 15th November, representatives from the national coalitions gathered to reflect on different tools and ideas on how to continue the work at transnational level, through the WeDO website and meetings. It contributed to develop a strategy for the WeDO Project follow up that will be used in 2013-2014 to carry on the work.

So the WeDO project has not ended. It is just a start!

More information on how to join the partnership on the [website front page](#), section 'Join us!'

Useful links:

- [Project website](#)
- [European Quality framework for long-term care services](#)
- [European Strategy for the wellbeing and dignity of older people](#)
- [National strategies](#)
- [Final conference webpage](#)
- [Press release](#)
- [The EUSTACEA project and the European Charter for the rights and responsibilities of older people in need of long-term care and assistance](#)

For more information, please contact Maude Luherne, WeDO Project coordinator, at maude.luherne@age-platform.eu