

47th SESSION

Ageing communities – ensuring access to quality social care for older persons

Resolution 504 (2024)¹

1. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (“the Congress”) refers to:
 - a. the explanatory memorandum on “Ageing communities – ensuring access to quality social care for older persons” (CG-SOC(2024)3-02);
 - b. Resolution 2168 (2017) “Human rights of older persons and their comprehensive care” of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe calling upon member States to ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of health care and long-term care for older persons;
 - c. Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on “human rights of older persons” making recommendations concerning the autonomy, participation and care of older persons, based on a number of practices identified across Europe;
 - d. the European Social Charter (revised; ETS No. 163) , guaranteeing rights of access to the highest possible standard of health, to social and medical assistance, and to social welfare services, and encourages measures to ensure elderly persons can remain full members of society for as long as possible, choose their lifestyle freely and lead independent lives in their family surroundings;
 - e. Recommendation COM(2022)441 of the Council of the European Union on “Access to affordable high-quality long-term care” recommending that EU member States “continuously align the offer of long-term care services to long-term care needs”;
 - f. the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030) and the Age-Friendly City Framework of the World Health Organization (WHO) as international frameworks promoting older people’s rights, health and well-being;
 - g. the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular SDG 3 promoting healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages, and SDG 11 promoting inclusive and sustainable cities and communities.
2. The Congress notes with concern that:
 - a. most Council of Europe member States are experiencing an overall trend towards an ageing population and ageing local communities;

¹ Debated and adopted by the Congress on 16 October 2024 (see document CG(2024)47-17, explanatory memorandum, co-rapporteurs Carla DEJONGHE, Belgium (R, ILDG) and Joanne LABAN, United Kingdom (L, ECR).

b. local and regional authorities are in the frontline of institutions facing the challenges of an ageing population and growing demand for long-term care services in different settings;

c. in particular local and regional authorities are confronted with new challenges in the area of long-term care, including increasingly higher costs for home-based and institutional care arrangements, staff shortages, maintaining of quality standards in long-term care, the need for better interagency co-operation and changing family patterns;

d. to address such challenges and cities and make cities and communities more age-friendly, subnational authorities will need better legislative, policy and financial support from national governments first, and through European programmes where available;

e. while individual local and regional authorities have started developing effective and innovative responses to some of these challenges, these are not yet sufficiently known and applied across Council of Europe member States to guarantee access to quality social care for all older persons.

3. The Congress calls on local and regional authorities in member States to create a favourable context for ageing communities and ensure the well-being, social inclusion and full enjoyment of human rights by older persons by:

a. developing age-friendly cities and communities through measures in a range of relevant policy areas, according to the WHO Framework for Age-Friendly Cities, including community and healthcare, transportation, housing, social participation, outdoor spaces and buildings, respect and social inclusion, civil participation and employment, communication and information;

b. providing accessible age-friendly services and environments, including by offering a variety of solutions of home-based and institutional long-term care services;

c. supporting older persons to live autonomously for as long as possible and facilitate their full participation in the social, economic and political life of their local community;

d. investing into innovative measures and approaches to respond to the key challenges identified for local communities across Europe, including by investing in prevention programmes, developing effective long-term care services, strengthening interagency co-operation and community-based solutions, upholding quality standards, and guaranteeing equal access to and quality of services within local communities and between the territories of each country;

e. fostering and supporting volunteering work, community-centred initiatives and other forms of informal care;

f. designing and developing services for older persons in a more effective manner by using communication technology where appropriate;

g. engaging older persons in co-production approaches to ensure that policies and services correspond to their actual needs;

h. establishing quality assurance tools through local regulations, supervisory mechanisms and procurement policies;

i. supporting formal and informal carers, often women, in improving their working conditions (notably those related to working times, salaries and psychosocial support), by strengthening their professional training and development, by making work in the care sector generally more attractive, and by facilitating access to it for professionals coming from abroad and other sectors;

j. promoting, within their respective national contexts, the integration of local and regional action into comprehensive national strategies for older persons' care, thus supporting the coherent development of age-friendly societies across the country in a balanced manner;

k. exchanging good practices in a European and international context to constantly improve long-term care and other services for older persons, for example by joining the WHO network of age-friendly cities and communities.

4. The Congress commits to supporting the implementation of this Resolution by disseminating and promoting innovative action to be taken to guarantee the fully enjoyment of older person's human rights and the effective provision of quality care services at the local level closest to citizens.