



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from : The Presidency
to : COUNCIL (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs)

**Subject : Information from the Czech Presidency on the
“Conference on the Care and Protection of senior citizens - the dignity and
risks of the elderly”
(Prague, 25-26 May 2009)
(Any other business item)**

Delegations will find attached a note from the Presidency.

Information from the Presidency
Conference on the Care and Protection of senior citizens
- the dignity and risks of the elderly
Prague, 25-26 May 2009

The conference focused on how to avoid risks for the elderly and how to ensure dignity. Delegates from 26 countries representing EU, EFTA, USA, Israel, India, Argentina and Ukraine took part in the conference and discussed significant changes occurring in the care and protection of senior citizens.

Services for senior citizens and their relatives are influenced by social change, including changes in household and family structures. The conference dealt with issues concerning frailty in old age, diversity in later life, family solidarity, long-term care, health prevention beyond a disease model, misuse of pharmacology, education, training and lifelong learning.

In deep old age, dignity becomes an increasingly important issue, as the possibilities of autonomy become reduced. Therefore, the Conference noted that dignity should be recognised in terms of a combination of medical, psychological and social factors.

The Conference concluded that, in order to adapt to a changing balance between age groups, it is important to create facilitative environments that will promote social participation, increase intergenerational solidarity and promote public health. A balance between family care, health and welfare support is crucial for the maintenance of intergenerational solidarity within families and for removing the circumstances within which mistreatment may arise. The Conference recommended designing comprehensive policies which combine family policy and ageing, to promote partnership between families, elders, the State, communities and civil society.

Concerning long-term care, it was stressed that coordination between health and social care services should be improved, and delivery in a community setting should be prioritized wherever possible. The Conference highlighted that it is important to recognise that health is more than an absence of disease; the specific health problems of frail elderly people go beyond the disease-model. Greater attention should be devoted to preventive measures, comprehensive rehabilitation, psychotherapy and other non-pharmacological interventions.

It was emphasised that education, training and lifelong learning are highly relevant to the care and protection of senior citizens. There is a need to see education in a broader context, including promoting understanding between the different generations.

The conference contributed to a common exchange of views and best practices within the open method of co-ordination. The Declaration, as the outcome of the Conference, brings together the thoughts and conclusions for policy-makers, non-governmental organisations, business and scientific interests from across the EU.