

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3522/08
by Neena Gill (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Tackling abuse and neglect of the elderly

Studies across Europe have shown that hospitals and care centres have seen the elderly fall victim to poor treatment whilst in care. This includes facing emotional or physical cruelty, not being fed or clothed properly, or suffering from malnutrition because food is taken away too soon. This sort of treatment must be condemned and immediately put to an end.

In 1991 the UN adopted a set of 18 'Principles for Older Persons' clustered under five themes: independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment, and dignity. Therefore, any inappropriate treatment of the elderly in care can be seen as a violation of their human rights.

Following its discussion paper on 'What can the European Union do to protect dignity in old age and prevent elder abuse?' of March 2008, could the Commission outline the actions it plans to take on combating abuse and neglect of the elderly in Europe? Recognising that the EU has limited competence within this area, nevertheless, I believe that the EU urgently needs to propose solid action. At the very least, is the Commission prepared to propose minimum standards across Member States that protect the dignity of the elderly within health and social care?