

The European Charter of Patients' Rights was drafted in 2002 by **Active Citizenship Network** in collaboration with 12 citizens' organizations from different EU countries: Apovita (Portugal), Cittadinanzattiva (Italy), Confederación de Consumidores y Usuarios (Spain), Danish Consumer Council (Denmark), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Versicherte und Patienten e. V. (Germany), Fédération Belge contre le Cancer (Belgium), International Neurotrauma Research Organization (Austria), Irish Patients Association Ltd (Ireland), KE.P.K.A (Greece), Nederlandse Patiënten Consumenten Federatie (The Netherlands), The Patients Association (UK), Vereniging Samenwerkende Ouder- en Patiëntenorganisaties (The Netherlands).

**Active Citizenship Network** ([www.activecitizenship.net](http://www.activecitizenship.net)) is a European network of about 100 civic organisations from 30 countries promoted by the Italian NGO, Cittadinanzattiva. It is aimed at contributing to the development of a European active citizenship.

**The European Charter of Patient's Rights has been translated by**



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**Rights of active citizenship**

The Charter sets forth 3 rights of active citizenship. They allow individuals and groups of organized citizens to promote and verify the implementation of patients' rights and as such, they are the necessary corollary of the Charter.

- Right to perform general interest activities
- Right to perform advocacy activities
- Right to participate in policy-making

The European Charter of Patients' Rights states **14 patients' rights** that together aim to guarantee a "high level of human health protection" (Article 35 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union) and to assure the high quality of services provided by the various national health services in Europe. The 14 rights are an embodiment of fundamental rights and, as such, they must be recognised and respected in every country. They are correlated with duties and responsibilities that both citizens and health care stakeholders have to assume. The Charter applies to all individuals, recognising the fact that differences, such as age, gender, religion, socio-economic status etc., may influence individual health care needs.



# European Charter of Patients' Rights



- 1 Right to preventive measures**  
Every individual has the right to a proper service in order to prevent illness.
- 2 Right of access**  
Every individual has the right of access to the health services that his or her health needs require. The health services must guarantee equal access to everyone, without discriminating on the basis of financial resources, place of residence, kind of illness or time of access to services.
- 3 Right to information**  
Every individual has the right to access to all information regarding their state of health, the health services and how to use them, and all that scientific research and technological innovation makes available.
- 4 Right to consent**  
Every individual has the right of access to all information that might enable him or her to actively participate in the decisions regarding his or her health; this information is a prerequisite for any procedure and treatment, including the participation in scientific research.
- 5 Right to free choice**  
Each individual has the right to freely choose from among different treatment procedures and providers on the basis of adequate information.

- 6 Right to privacy and confidentiality**  
Every individual has the right to the confidentiality of personal information, including information regarding his or her state of health and potential diagnostic or therapeutic procedures, as well as the protection of his or her privacy during the performance of diagnostic exams, specialist visits, and medical/surgical treatments in general.
- 7 Right to respect of patients' time**  
Each individual has the right to receive necessary treatment within a swift and predetermined period of time. This right applies at each phase of the treatment.
- 8 Right to the observance of quality standards**  
Each individual has the right of access to high quality health services on the basis of the specification and observance of precise standards.
- 9 Right to safety**  
Each individual has the right to be free from harm caused by the poor functioning of health services, medical malpractice and errors, and the right of access to health services and treatments that meet high safety standards.

- 10 Right to innovation**  
Each individual has the right of access to innovative procedures, including diagnostic procedures, according to international standards and independently of economic or financial considerations.
- 11 Right to avoid unnecessary suffering and pain**  
Each individual has the right to avoid as much suffering and pain as possible, in each phase of his or her illness.
- 12 Right to personalized treatment**  
Each individual has the right to diagnostic or therapeutic programmes tailored as much as possible to his or her personal needs.
- 13 Right to complain**  
Each individual has the right to complain whenever he or she has suffered a harm and the right to receive a response or other feedback.
- 14 Right to compensation**  
Each individual has the right to receive sufficient compensation within a reasonably short time whenever he or she has suffered physical or moral and psychological harm caused by a health service treatment.