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Maintain universal access to health care

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Strasbourg, 07/08/2014 – “Universal access to health care has been undermined by austerity measures and the economic crisis. Cuts in health services and difficult economic and social conditions are beginning to have a measurable impact on the health of the population in many countries. Yet the right to health is guaranteed by international and European human rights instruments. Everyone’s access to health care without discrimination belongs to the core content of this right”, says Nils Muižnieks, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, in his latest [Human Rights Comment](#) published today.

Cuts in health services

Health care spending in Europe began a downward slope in 2010, reversing a long-term trend as documented by the [OECD](#). At the same time, user charges have often gone up, making it more difficult for many population groups to receive the care they need. The [WHO](#) has defined universal coverage as access of everyone to health care services without suffering financial hardship in paying for them. ([continue reading](#))

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The Commissioner for Human Rights is an independent, non-judicial institution within the Council of Europe, mandated to promote awareness of, and respect for, human rights in the 47 member states of the Organisation. Elected by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the present Commissioner, Mr Nils Muižnieks, took up his function on 1 April 2012