

## **EFFE’s contribution for the UN 14th session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing Focus on the area “Social Inclusion”**

The topic of social inclusion of older people within the European Union is a growing subject, as the rate of elderly people in the European population is increasing at an important pace (from 90.5 million people aged 65 years and more at the start of 2019, to 129.8 million by 2050). **It is therefore essential to guarantee that the potential loss of autonomy, due to ageing, does not constitute for elderly people an excluding factor of the society and a prevention of fundamental rights and ensure active ageing.**<sup>1</sup>

The needs for long-term care services in the European Union will increase in correlation with this phenomenon. **The European Center for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) estimated in 2023 that the share of long-term care in the total employment, within the EU, must increase by 32% over the next decade in order to satisfy the growing demand for such services.**

The European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) sets out the key principles and rights intended to build a fairer Europe in the fields of labour markets and welfare systems, and several of these principles are essential in guaranteeing the social inclusion of older people (*“Right to old-age and income pension” – principle n°15, “Right to healthcare” – principle n°16, “Right to long-term care” – principle n°18 and “Right to access to essential services” – principle n°20*).<sup>2</sup>

As a response to these issues, the European Commission published on September 2022 a communication on the “EU Care Strategy”, that sets out a vision for the provision of long term-care in Europe (with a Council Recommendation “on the access to affordable high-quality long-term care”), outlines supportive actions at the EU level and calls for action at national level.

At the international level, the United Nations launched on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2023 the first edition of the “International Day of Care and Support”, which aims at bringing awareness to the value of the care sector in this global ageing population (**according to the World Health Organization (WHO), by 2050, the number of people aged 60 years or older is expected to reach 2.1 billion**). Despite considerable efforts, there is still

---

<sup>1</sup> [Ageing Europe - statistics on population developments, European Commission](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, European Commission](#)

much work to be done to ensure that elderly individuals worldwide can access the care they need in the manner they prefer.<sup>3</sup>

The European and International Federation for Family Employment & Home Care (EFFE) advocates for the structuring of the Personal and Household Services (PHS) sector. Many of these household employers are elderly individuals who specifically require such services to maintain autonomy in their homes. Inaccessibility to affordable homecare services may exclude certain elderly groups, particularly those in rural areas, where caregivers often serve as their primary social connection, enabling them to remain active and engaged.

As the number of countries grappling with a care crisis continues to rise due to unmet care needs and aging populations, **the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates a global workforce of 75.6 million domestic workers. When considering only those employed directly by households, domestic workers make up at least 25 percent of all paid care workers, encompassing roles such as nurses, teachers, doctors, and personal care workers. However, domestic workers frequently lack labor rights, social protection, and access to care services for themselves and their families, including maternity protection, child benefits, childcare, and long-term care services.**<sup>4</sup>

This lack of support significantly impacts the attractiveness of domestic work and contributes to shortages in personal and household services. To address this, it is crucial to recognize domestic workers as care providers within national policies and social security systems. This acknowledgment is fundamental to ensuring their labor rights, social protection, and access to adequate care services. Moreover, involving the voices of domestic workers and their employers in social dialogue is essential. By recognizing the status of elderly individuals who hire domestic workers as employers, we empower them to participate in negotiations concerning the recognition of domestic workers' skills, fair remuneration, and other benefits. Failure to do so silences the voices of the elderly, further excluding them from discussions on care and limiting their participation in public debates aimed at understanding their needs.

**It is imperative to raise awareness of the pivotal role domestic workers play in providing direct and indirect care to ageing individuals in need of support and long-term care. This recognition is essential for fostering a more inclusive and equitable care system that meets the diverse needs of both caregivers and care recipients.**

---

<sup>3</sup> *Ageing and Health*, World Health Organization

<sup>4</sup> [New ILO policy brief calls for domestic workers to be included in care policies to ensure their rights at work, International Labor Organization](#)