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## **EFFAT – EFFE – EFSI – UNI-Europa Joint Statement on Eurofound’s Industrial relations landscape report**

The PHS stakeholders, EFFAT, EFFE, EFSI and UNI Europa would like to congratulate Eurofound for the publication of its report [“Industrial relations landscape report on Central government administration, education, human health, local and regional government, and social services sectors”](#).

Based on existing Representativeness Studies in [social services](#) and [human health](#), the study seeks to better understand the industrial relations landscape and assist the Commission in supporting social dialogue in the above sectors.

Not only does Eurofound’s rigorous study offer significant insight on how the future of sectoral social dialogue activities in human health and social services can be organised. For the first time, it also acknowledges that Personal and Household (PHS) activities form an increasingly important part of the human health and social services.

In doing so, the landscape report builds on previous communications by the European Commission which defines PHS as “*a broad range of activities that contribute to well-being at home of families and individuals: childcare (CC), long term care (LTC) for the elderly and for persons with disabilities, cleaning, remedial classes, home repairs, gardening, ICT support, etc.*”<sup>1</sup>. As the landscape report states: “*These activities appear to relate at least partly to social services in NACE code 88 and also NACE code 97.*”

At the global level, PHS are usually described under the term “*domestic and care sector*”. According to ILO definitions, domestic workers are those workers in an employment relationship working in or for a private household or households. Rather than defining domestic work according to tasks, the distinguishing feature of domestic work is the workplace. The inclusion of domestic workers in the care workforce thus recognizes that care provision includes not only direct care but also indirect relational care as well as non-relational, care work, such as cleaning and cooking, which provide the necessary preconditions for personal caregiving<sup>2</sup>. As such, PHS workers belong to the care workforce, and thus should be represented in any future social dialogue activities at the EU-level.

Kristjan Bragason EFFAT General Secretary: “*Together with the social partners and the European institutions, we must work to create a constructive social dialogue and to ensure*

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission Staff Working Document on exploiting the employment potential of personal and household services, SWD (2012) 95 final

<sup>2</sup> International Labour Office (2018), Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work, International Labour Office – Geneva: ILO, 2018, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_633135.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_633135.pdf)



*that domestic workers are covered by all EU labour and social legislation, including occupational health and safety regulations, that they enjoy equal rights and protection, including those who provide services in non-standard forms of employment or via platforms, paying particular attention to (undocumented) migrant domestic workers.”*

Furthermore, the report also acknowledges EFFAT, EFFE, EFSI and UNI Europa’s cooperation since 2016. This included joint recommendations on the quality of jobs and services in PHS. This was followed up by a joint statement on working conditions which was issued in the context of the Ad-PHS project. During the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the organisations issued a statement on vaccination for PHS workers, which deployment should also be prioritised among non-residential social services workers.

Marie-Béatrice Levoux, EFFE’s President: *“I welcome the work achieved by Eurofound in the Landscape report and the fact that it takes into account the PHS sector. It’s indeed crucial to recognize the role of PHS stakeholders in raising awareness on PHS workers’ access to decent social rights, as they were on the front line during the covid crisis. EFFE will continue to work at EU level closely with other PHS stakeholders for the recognition of the added value of the sector and the direct employment model. Freedom of choice for EU citizen to choose the response that suits them best is essential”.*

The importance of PHS workers in fighting the pandemic is underlined in the communications of the WHO. Indeed, the WHO considers homecare workers as part of the wider healthcare and social care workforce, and it unequivocally stated that homecare workers should be considered ‘essential workers’ and that the infection prevention control mechanism ought to apply to them as well. This was restated in the WHO’s updated version on Advice to decision makers on the use of masks for healthy people in community settings.<sup>3</sup>

Herwig Muyldermans, EFSI’s President welcomed the fact that *“Eurofound’s landscape report highlights PHS European stakeholders’ efforts in the past years to improve the working conditions in a sector that has proven to be essential during the COVID-19 pandemic. EFSI is deeply committed to pursue a structured and stronger dialogue at EU level in order to help the sector face the many challenges it faces for the benefits of workers and users alike.”*

In 2022, the European Labour Authority’s Undeclared Work working group will publish a report and organise a seminar on PHS activities, which the PHS stakeholders are contributing to. According to the most recent research conducted on domestic workers in Europe<sup>4</sup>, there were nearly 9,5 million PHS workers in the EU 27 in 2015<sup>5</sup>. Among them 6,3 million are declared and at least 3,1 million domestic and care workers are undeclared. For these workers and services providers, an EU sectoral social dialogue would be a crucial step to eradicate undeclared work and create an equal playing field.

With the European Commission announcing its Care Strategy in the summer 2022, the landscape report guides all employers’ organisations and trade unions toward establishing a

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-in-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-healthcare-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)-outbreak](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-in-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-healthcare-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov)-outbreak)

<sup>4</sup> Lebrun, JF. (2020).

<sup>5</sup> 2015 being the last year for which data used from the different database are available, it is the year of reference used.



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meaningful discussion in the future. This discussion needs to engender the diversity of service provision - public, non-profit, for-profit - to tackle the challenges of undeclared work, fragmented collective bargaining at the national level and the rise of online platforms, amongst others. The growth of homecare and increased investment into 'care in the community' means that these workers deserve increased recognition. Having all organisations cooperate in a new social dialogue structure can ensure this.

Oliver Roethig, UNI Europa Regional Secretary: *"The pandemic has shown that employees in the care sector need to be protected. The rise of multinational companies and non-profit franchises calls for European solutions. The study provides social partners and the European Commission with valuable insights to strengthen social dialogue in the areas covered both nationally and at the EU-level. Together with our sister unions and the employers, a new Sectoral Social Dialogue mirroring the diversity of the sector can bring the recognition that this essential sector deserves."*

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**EFFAT** is the **European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions**. As a European Trade Union Federation representing 120 national trade unions from 35 European countries, EFFAT defends the interests of more than 22 million workers employed along the food chain. EFFAT is a member of the ETUC and the European regional organisation of the IUF.

**EFFE**, the **European Federation for Family Employment & Homecare**, represents the interests of national stakeholders including social partners organisations (workers and employers) operating in the field of direct employment. This model is characterised by a contractual work relationship between two private individuals, without any trading or profit-making objective.

**EFSI**, the **European Federation for Services to Individuals**, is the voice of the Personal and Household Services industry at European level, representing national associations, employers' organisations, PHS providers and companies involved in the development of personal and household services, and currently operating in 21 EU Member States.

**UNI-Europa** is the **European Trade Union Federation for 7 million service workers**. It speaks for the sectors that constitute the backbone of economic and social life in Europe. Headquartered in the heart of Brussels, UNI Europa represents 272 national trade unions in 50 countries, including: Commerce, Banking Insurance and Central Banks, Gaming, Graphical and Packaging, Hair and Beauty, Information and Communication Technology Services, Media, Entertainment and Arts, Postal Services and Logistics, Private Care and Social Insurance, Industrial Cleaning and Private Security, Professional Sport and Leisure, Professionals/Managers and Temporary Agency Workers.