

### **EFFE's reaction to the adoption of Recommendations on early childhood and long-term care**

EFFE has followed with great interest the elaboration and adoption on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December of the Recommendations by the Council on early childhood education and care and on affordable high-quality long-term care, aiming at improving the situation for both care receivers and the people caring for them, professionally or informally.

EFFE welcomes this first step and the adoption by Member states of both Recommendations and will closely follow the implementation at national level and how it will lead to the creation of a framework for the Personal and Household Services (PHS) sector.

The PHS sector provides essential services enabling elderly or disabled people to pursue a good and dignified life in their own home and by remaining active of their life. **PHS help them to carry out Activities of Daily Living** (direct care activities), to remain socially active and maintain the bonds with their family and community. Furthermore, **they also contribute to the Instrumental Activities of Daily Living** (indirect care activities) allowing for the care recipients to have a good living environment in their own homes and provide the necessary preconditions for personal caregiving. **Regarding childcare, individual arrangements represent a third option** between collective childcare and women at home taking care of their children. It's a complementary tailored made solution adaptable to parents with night or long, early, or late shifts that collective childcare facilities do not cover and are not adapted for. The access to consistent and **diversified solutions enables both care givers and care receivers to pursue their professional activity**.

EFFE underlines that:

- The **need to ensure available, quality, affordable and accessible care services** with better working conditions, gender equality and work-life balance for carers, and to improve the situation for both carers and care receivers is crucial. The recognition by the Council of the care workforce facing difficult working conditions and underlining that domestic & care workers are the ones facing the most precarious and exploitative conditions are essential.
- Both Recommendations do not explore **all opportunities of modernisation of the current objectives**. The added value of PHS to long-term care and to childcare are not adequately reflected in both Recommendations.
- The **lack of recognition of the PHS sectors in both texts will impact the objectives of availability and affordability of childcare & long-term care services**, as well as decent working conditions for all domestic workers. The empowerment of the PHS sector is necessary to properly undertake the rising demand for high-quality care services. All operating models must be considered equally and the equal promotion of all modes of long-term care provision is important in order to give to the people in need of care and their families all the necessary resources to choose the assistance model that suits them best for their self-determination, participation, safe and secure ageing.
- The recommendation rightfully highlights **the role of informal carers** and adequately underlines the importance of cooperation between formal carers and informal ones to ensure qualitative, accessible, and affordable care services for those in need. The role of Member States here is crucial. **Clear procedures must be established to identify informal carers and support them in their caregiving activities**. No other system than the Personal and Household Services will allow Member States to achieve this objective without negatively impacting the labour market.



Therefore, it is essential to structure the sector and build a strong social dialogue to help and support informal carers and allow them to remain in the labour market.

- **The performance of direct and indirect care services are equally needed to ensure the proper delivery of home care services and decent respite solutions for informal carers.** Indeed, both activities are not mutually exclusive and usually overlap. The boundaries between direct and indirect care work are blurry as a person might wash a dependent person and then bring out their garbage or mop their floor after a shower. Therefore, all workers should be included in the care workforce to avoid the creation of two classes workers.
- The domestic & home care sector cannot develop its full potential on the formal labour market because of high labour costs and employment content. This dimension was not taken into consideration by the Council, which poses several risks of undermining the sector if the Member States do not provide tools to respond to this problem. Without sufficient financing or support for formal care provision, it is likely that the workers and/or users will rather turn to undeclared work. There is a necessity to incentivise the workforce to stay or enter the declared labour market by making it more attractive and beneficial than being part of the undeclared workforce. **Making PHS affordable to all is the prerequisite for any significant reduction of undeclared work in the sector.**

**EFFE will closely follow the actions that Member States** will implement at national level, assess the effectiveness of their policies, and support strategic reforms in order to ensure a real accessibility to care receivers in accordance with their choices and needs. EFFE shall make itself available to the relevant authorities who will have the difficult task of developing all the measures to implement the Recommendations.

### ***About EFFE***

*The European Federation for Family Employment and Home Care (EFFE) is one of the main actors of the personal and household services (PHS) sector at EU level, representing members as national organisations of households as employers and of domestic workers and childminders.*

*Created in 2013, 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 but providing social rights and decent working conditions for worker.*

*EFFE is recognised since January 2022 by Employers and Trade Unions counterparts as a representative PHS employers' organisation. Furthermore, EFFE sealed its commitment with EFFAT, EFSI and UNI-Europa as social partners in the Personal and Household Services sector to commonly increase the sectorial recognition, working conditions, and perceptions by agreeing on a common work program.*

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