

Declaration in the context of the Europe Day and of the launch of the European Year of Skills

In this Europe Day, the EU commemorates the signing of the Schuman Declaration. As 2023 is the European Year of Skills, the EU is eager to help people get the right skills for quality jobs and to address skills shortages.

The recognition of the usefulness of the home care sector and the specific professional skills they require are essential to face the forthcoming demographic and societal challenges. Indeed, the EU must anticipate the growth of home support needs of an ageing population but also deal with another major demographic change: the aging of the personal and household services employee population. By 2030, one out of two employees in the sector will reach retirement age.

The actions taken by the EU in the context of this European Year of Skills will be essential to help the EU Member States that are struggling to attract and retain care workers with the right skills.

Reducing the levels of labour shortages in Europe will only be possible by increasing the attractiveness of the care sectors and occupations, activating underutilised labour, and better matching supply and demand. In addition to work conditions, pay and autonomy, improving job quality factors requires growing skills and learning.

The professionalization of domestic workers in Europe is both the only one way to match the service provided with ever-evolving families' needs, and the means of ensuring recognition by families that the qualities needed actually fall within the scope of professional skills.

Therefore, EFFE calls on the European Commission, Council of the European Union and European Parliament to foster the professionalisation and attractiveness of care and personal and household services work through long-term investment programmes, access to skills training and certification for formal and informal skills, and campaigns to improve the image of the sector.

We strongly underline the necessity to develop a strong social dialogue and collective agreements that are essential in the improvement of working conditions. To attract and retain care workers, they must be involved in the exchanges in order to understand their needs and expectations. Effective social dialogue is a precondition for a quality, qualified workforce that enjoys strong social rights. It is therefore essential to encourage employer and worker representation. At present, PHS stakeholders are insufficiently organised and their skills are unrecognised by public authorities in most Member States.

EFFE will support the European Commission to tackle the skills and will be actively involved to support the creation of favourable conditions to increase formal and informal skills of ALL care workers. To reduce staff shortages and improving the gender balance in the long-term care workforce the domestic and home care work cannot remain undervalued and under recognised within the care sector.