

EUROPEAN MANIFESTO FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL AND HOUSEHOLD SERVICES THROUGHOUT EUROPE

Our European societies are currently facing various demographic, economic and social challenges such as population ageing or the economic crisis. These challenges lead to higher unemployment rate, difficulties achieving a better work-life balance and a decrease of potential carers. In order to face those challenges, European countries need to find innovative and affordable solutions.

In many European countries, the personal and household services (PHS) sector is recognized as an employment gaining sector. In addition, due to increasing demand and needs, the sector is expected to create 5.5 millions new jobs throughout Europe in the coming years, thus contributing to reaching the EU2020 employment target. Furthermore, the development of the personal and household services sector should contribute to the provision of more sustainable childcare and elderly care services in a more person-centred approach. However, the PHS sector suffers from a lack of recognition and understanding of its specificities.

The signatories of this Manifesto want to stress the major contribution that personal and household services play in our societies and the positive externalities they generate if supported by adequate public policies across Europe.

The signatories of this Manifesto share the view that :

- PHS benefit the society as a whole by creating long-term and non-transferable jobs for people with varied levels of qualification. They enable women and family carers to return on the job market, help to conciliate professional and personal life and finally contributes to the social inclusion of the most dependents ones. In the framework of an increasing ageing population PHS offers a financially manageable solution and suits older people's will to stay in their home as long as possible as well as a solution to meet the needs of their relatives and carers,
- it is extremely damaging that an important part of personal and household services is provided by undeclared workers. This situation is prejudicial to the workers, the users and the State,
- long-term public intervention is necessary to support the development of PHS sector. It will first and foremost move these services from the shadow to the formal economy,
- supporting measures :
 - should reduce the cost of formal employment through the use of different tools such as social benefits and tax reduction, support to the supply (reduced VAT rates, employers' contribution exemption) and simplified procedure for hiring domestic workers (such as services vouchers). These tools should guarantee a level playing field between various providers. Such measures will boost the PHS sector while giving to all citizens a facilitated access to such services. It is necessary to be committed to provide an universal access to quality PHS,
 - has demonstrated to be financially manageable for Member States due to their numerous positive side effects. Thus, their design and evaluation must take into account their numerous direct and indirect earn-back effects,

- must benefit to all EU citizens, including the most vulnerable ones. They must ensure that users' freedom of choice is guaranteed, as no one else than users know better how to fulfill their needs. In addition, it must be taken into account that service users have various needs, especially vulnerable people whose needs could be particularly complex. In this regard, supporting measures should ensure that the health, social care and personal and household services sectors are integrated in a broader care sector in which services are provided in an holistic and person-centered approach.
- public and private employers (including SMEs) have also a major role to play in the development of PHS by granting access to them - through co-financing schemes - to their employees in the framework of their work-life balance initiatives,
- the quality of PHS is deeply interlinked with workers' skills and working condition, the two dimensions cannot be thought independently of one another. Thus, the implementation of quality standards should result from a dialogue between public authorities, services providers (from both public and private sectors) and users. In addition, stakeholders must discuss the best way to train workers on how to work together in an integrated approach,
- the professionalization of PHS workers is crucial to the long-lasting development of the sector in the formal economy and a better recognition of their role by the society. It should relate to customer contact, organizational skills, services' design and delivery as well as prevention of occupational hazards. It must consist of a targeted initial training or qualifications and continuing training of employees,
- the establishment of sectoral social dialogue will contribute to improve working conditions and jobs' attractiveness.

CALL FOR ACTION

Bearing in mind the above mentioned principles, the signatories of the Manifesto urge European and national decision makers to commit themselves in the development of PHS. As part of the follow up of the Employment Package and the Social Investment Pact that the EU has already initiated, the signatories of this Manifesto call on the European Commission to :

- support the exchange and the dissemination of good practices and foster cooperation and mutual learning thanks to the creation of a European Alliance for personal and household services,
- offer Member States a technical assistance based on the best practices, when designing and evaluating supporting measures,
- work with stakeholders in order to reach a common understanding of the concept of personal and household services with the aim to improve the statistical process and data information available on PHS, notably through the award of a NACE code for household services,
- coordinate its different ongoing initiatives related to PHS notably the European Innovation Partnership on Healthy and Active Ageing, the Staff working document on exploiting the employment potential of PHS, the Recommendation on Investing in children and the Staff

working document on long term care in ageing societies within the Social Investment Package as well as the forthcoming European Platform on undeclared work.

The signatories of this Manifesto further call on Member States to :

- maintain, strengthen or implement an effective public support for the development of PHS based on the above mentioned principles,
- use the European Social Funds to develop innovative practises in this field,
- ratify the ILO Convention Nr. 189 on decent work for domestic workers adopted in June 2011,
- support the development of a sectoral social dialogue with the aim to adopt codes of conduct, bargaining agreements, common standards, self-regulation procedures or certification processes.

Launched in Brussels, on the 12th of November 2013 and signed by the following organisations :

