

EU LEADERS INVITED TO ADOPT CONCRETE MEASURES TOWARD A BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE

EFSI welcomes the publication of the European Reconciliation Package

BRUSSELS, 5 March 2015 : On the 3rd of March, COFACE (the Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union) launched the **European Reconciliation Package** which is the main policy outcome of the 2014 Year of Reconciling Work and Family Life in Europe.

Due to a change in families structures and greater difficulties for the citizens to cope with everyday life tasks and family responsibilities, a growing demand among EU citizens for a better work-life balance has emerged over the past years. Thus, the European Reconciliation Package **highlights different policies and practices developed at local and national level that can support citizens in reconciling their work, family and care responsibilities**. It reflects on the challenges and opportunities and presents recommendations of what needs to be done at EU and national level.

In the foreword, László Andor former EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (2010-2014) stresses that *“the EU can play a significant role in helping families and communities cope with the current economic hardships and invest in a more productive future”*. EFSI supports this statement and **calls on the European leaders to adopt a comprehensive work-life balance strategy**, targeting both male and female workers and not only parents or carers of elderly and dependents, because all workers (regardless the size of the organisation they work for) are concerned. The strategy should promote a reorganization of working time arrangements as well as the development of personal and household services (PHS)¹.

“Whereas 53% of EU workers declares coming home too tired to do household jobs that needs to be done several times a month², the PHS sector offers innovative and affordable solutions respecting EU citizens’ preferences and needs” said Aurélie Decker, EFSI Director. Indeed, by enabling families and individuals to externalize daily tasks made at home and by providing various solutions regarding child and elderly care, PHS represents a strong solution among others for a better work-life balance.

Together with COFACE and the other members of the 2014 Alliance, EFSI will continue to bring attention to the necessity to design and implement effective reconciliation policies as it would generate a win-win situation – both for individuals EU citizens as well as for the EU social and economic development.

¹ Personal and household services (PHS) comprises of a broad range of activities that contribute to the well-being of families and individuals which are: home services (housework, ironing, gardening, small repair work, delivery of food, etc.), child care facilities including all kind of services (nursery, nanny, shared childcare, holiday centres, baby sitting, etc.), tutoring (school help, IT assistance, etc.) and services to enable disabled, dependants and elderly people to continue to live in their own home.

² 3rd European Quality of Life Survey, Eurofound, November 2012.

The European Reconciliation Package can be downloaded in pdf version here: <http://www.coface-eu.org/en/Publications/European-Reconciliation-Package/> A French, Spanish and Italian version will be available by the end of the month.

For more information on PHS contribution to work-life balance, see the booklet published by EFSI in November 2014 : http://www.efsi-europe.eu/fileadmin/MEDIA/Event/6th_European_Conference/PHS_a_key_tool_for_WLB_EFSI_November_2014.pdf

The **2014 Alliance** is a group of civil society networks, local authorities, academia and work-life balance professionals which was originally set up to support the COFACE-led campaign to have 2014 designated as the European Year of Reconciling Work and Family Life, and continued to be involved during the implementation phase of 2014.

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As the European Federation for Services to Individuals, **EFSI** is the representative body of national federations and associations as well as companies involved in the development of personal and household services in Europe. Through its members, EFSI is present in 22 EU Members' States.