

The European Care Strategy: a missed opportunity for 9,5 million workers

BRUSSELS, 07 September 2022: On the occasion of the release of the European Care Strategy, the European Federation for Services to Individuals (EFSI) wishes to recall the fundamental role of 9,5 million personal and household services (PHS) workers in the provision of care services to thousands of million Europeans.

Even though the European Parliament recognised the paramount function of PHS last July¹, the PHS sector is not mentioned once in the strategy. “*Whereas a vast majority of Europeans express their desire to age at home and the fundamental role of the sector in ensuring care continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic, PHS are missing in the Strategy*” deplores Aurélie Decker, EFSI’s Director.

PHS, as defined by the European Commission in 2012, comprise a broad range of activities that contribute to the well-being of individuals, their families and work-life balance². Also referred to as domestic work on the international scene, PHS take place in the private homes of individuals and include both direct and indirect care provided by a professional. Therefore, it is important to recall that home care and domestic support services are one and the same thing and should be considered as such in the European Care Strategy.

As emphasised by the ILO, PHS workers are an integral part of the care sector as “*care provision includes not only personal care but also non-relational, indirect care work*”³. While the European Parliament called on the European Commission “*to address in the European care strategy the challenging working and employment conditions [...], and to lay foundation for recognition, regulation and professionalis[ation] of personal and household services*”⁴, it has been completely put aside in the Strategy.

Contingently, Aurélie Decker, EFSI’s director calls for “*the political courage of MEPs and the Council to make sure that the entirety of the care sector is accounted for in the strategy, and therefore includes PHS explicitly, as they were omitted by the European Commission in the present strategy proposal. PHS*

¹See European Parliament, (2022), *European Parliament resolution of 5 July 2022 towards a common European action on care (2021/2253(INI))*, P9_TA(2022)0278, para. 100, accessed on September 7, 2022 at : https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0278_EN.pdf.

² See European Commission, (2012) Staff working document on exploiting the potential of the personal and household services, accompanying the document communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions : Towards a job rich recovery, p. 4.

³ International Labour Office (2018), *Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work*. International Labour Organisation (ILO), Geneva, p. 168.

⁴ European Parliament, (2022), *European Parliament resolution of 5 July 2022 towards a common European action on care (2021/2253(INI))*, P9_TA(2022)0278, para. 100, accessed on September 7, 2022 at : https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0278_EN.pdf.

workers and users should get the attention they deserve". Indeed, the European Care Strategy should account for the care givers, hence, being part of the care workforce, PHS workers should be equally entitled to proper consideration and valorisation. *"Rendering visible what has been purposely left invisible should be a priority of the strategy, especially considering the importance of PHS workers in the care sector"*, she added.

Furthermore, mentioning home care as an alternative option for institutionalised care is a step forwards, however, to ensure that people have all the cards in hand to actually decide which type of care they want to receive, EFSI considers that all models need to be homogeneously promoted and emphasised.

The EFSI refers to its recommendations in its latest [position paper](#) regarding its expectations for PHS within the care sector. Therefore, to ensure proper recognition at the European level of the sector, EFSI is committed to a reinforced dialogue with its social dialogue counterparts. In addition, Aurélie Decker calls for a dialogue with the European Commission so as to highlight the fundamental aspects missing in the present strategy.

For further information you can contact:

Aurélie Decker
aurelie.decker@efsi-europe.eu
+32 473 66 48 69

The European Federation for Services to Individuals (EFSI) represents the Personal and Household Services' (PHS) sector at the European level. Actively operating through its members across 21 EU Member States, it brings together PHS national associations, employers' organisations, providers, and companies involved in the enhancement of personal and household services. Moreover, EFSI is recognised by its trade unions counterparts as PHS employers' organisations representative.

European Federation for Services to Individuals (EFSI)
Avenue du Port, 86 C, box 302, 1000 Brussels
Tel : +32 2 204 08 73 - info@efsi-europe.eu
Website : www.efsi-europe.eu