



# EFSI's contribution to the Call for Evidence on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union

*October 2022*

## **ABOUT EFSI**

The [European Federation for Services to Individuals](#) (EFSI) is the **voice of the Personal and Household Services (PHS) industry at European level – also called domestic work at the international level** – , representing national associations, employers' organisations, PHS providers and companies involved in the development of personal and household services, and currently operating in 21 EU Member States. EFSI is recognised by Employers and Trade Unions counterparts as a representative PHS employers' organisation. Furthermore, EFSI sealed its commitment with EFFAT, EFFE and UNI-Europa as social partners in the Personal and Household Services sector to commonly increase the sectorial recognition, working conditions, and perceptions.

Established in 2006, the EFSI's mission is to foster a favourable environment for PHS industry in Europe, especially by improving the image and perception of the sector and promoting adequate policies in support of its development. Moreover, EFSI's Members vision is to ensure that the specificity of the sector is recognised and that the provision and access to high quality and affordable personal and household services are granted as a result of adequate economic, social and legal conditions.

The PHS sector includes a broad range of activities carried out in households and related to personal assistance (early childhood and education care, childcare, long-term care in situations of dependence, disability, invalidity, etc.), broadly identified as “**direct care services**” or “care-related services”, and to activities of daily living (cleaning, ironing, gardening, preparing meals, small DIY, maintenance, remedial classes, etc.) united under the term of “**indirect care services**” or “household support services”.

## EFSI'S POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

EFSI welcomes the European Commission's initiative to launch an initiative on strengthening Social Dialogue between employers and workers at both European and national levels. Social partners have an essential role in the development of "fair economic, social and cohesive recovery and the green, digital and labour-market transitions"<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, EFSI appreciates the fact that the communication on Social Dialogue will be combined with a Council recommendation proposal on the role of social dialogue.

Social dialogue is fundamental as it allows for tripartite exchanges, consultations and negotiations that aim to improve any particular industry<sup>2</sup>. Coupled with collective bargaining for accountability of all parties involved, it contributes to raising the working standards, the image of the industries involved. In the case of the PHS industry, wherever there is social dialogue, PHS work is formalised, professionalised, it helps in the compliance promotion, helps guarantee social security for the workforce, allows them to benefit from extended protections and rights as well as benefit from the advocated subsidies and fiscal incentives for the sector<sup>3</sup>. However, in most EU Member States there is no collective bargaining agreement in the PHS sector nor are employers and workers organised through unions.

Subsequently, as the representative of the Personal and Household Services industry, **EFSI calls on:**

- The European Commission to **recognise the European Federation for Services to Individuals (EFSI) as the main representative of** the Personal and Household Services sector – also termed domestic work sector at international level – and therefore to consult EFSI on all initiatives related to the working conditions of PHS workers.
- The European Commission to take note of that the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT), the European Federation for Family Employment and Home Care (EFFE), the European Federation for Services to Individuals (EFSI), and UNI Europa **mutually recognise themselves as PHS social partners** and are committed for the increased recognition for the PHS sectors<sup>4</sup>. This Social Dialogue is committed to recognise and address the specific challenges linked to the provision of direct and indirect care services in the home of services' users.
- The European Commission to **acknowledge that PHS Social Dialogue is open to other EU Social Partners** (employers' organisations and trade unions) upon mutual agreement by all four parties. This will ensure that such Social Dialogue can engender the diversity of service provision – public, private for-profit and not-for-profit– to tackle

---

<sup>1</sup> European Commission (2022). *Call for Evidence on Strengthening Social Dialogue in the European Union*, p.1

<sup>2</sup> Ad-PHS project (2021) Tailored guidelines summary: social dialogue. Accessed on October 4th, 2022 at : [https://ad-phs.eu/ht8ag2/uploads/2021/10/04-summary\\_social-dialogues\\_rev.pdf](https://ad-phs.eu/ht8ag2/uploads/2021/10/04-summary_social-dialogues_rev.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> International Labour Organisation (2021), ILO Global Study "Making decent work a reality for domestic workers: Progress and prospects ten years after the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). Geneva: ILO. Accessed on October 3rd, 2022 at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_802551.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_802551.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> EFFAT, EFFE, EFSI, UNI Europa (2022). *Joint Press Release, Employers and Trade Unions in the PHS sectors join forces and adopt new strategy to raise the profile of the sector in Europe*, accessed on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 at: [http://www.efsi-europe.eu/fileadmin/MEDIA/Press/2022/EFFE\\_EFSI\\_EFFAT\\_UNI\\_Joint\\_Press\\_Release\\_final.pdf](http://www.efsi-europe.eu/fileadmin/MEDIA/Press/2022/EFFE_EFSI_EFFAT_UNI_Joint_Press_Release_final.pdf)

the challenges of undeclared work, fragmented or missing collective bargaining at the national level and the rise of online platforms, amongst other things.

- The European Commission to **commit to engage with all PHS stakeholders in the development of a European Social Dialogue to foster the creation of National social dialogues**, as their influence and expertise are crucial.
- The Member States to **promote capacity building of national Social Partners in the PHS sectors with the aim of strengthening sectoral collective bargaining and improve working conditions** in the sector, also in the spirit of the EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages and Collective Bargaining.
- The European Commission to **assist PHS social partners in developing national capacity** through earmarked EU funding (such as ESF+) so that PHS national social dialogue and national sectoral observatories can be created. At present, PHS stakeholders are insufficiently organised and recognised by public actors in most Member States. This hinders the development of a collaborative approach toward the aim to raise qualification and training requirements, wages and health as well as safety at work. The European Commission should foster the structuration of PHS stakeholders towards the establishment of national social dialogue.

**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](mailto:info@efsi-europe.eu)

Website : [www.efsi-europe.eu](http://www.efsi-europe.eu)