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EFFAT – EFFE – EFSI – UNI-Europa 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

Employers and Trade Unions in Personal and Household Services (PHS) sealed their commitment towards increased recognition for the PHS sectors - which employs almost 5% of the entire EU workforce- by adopting a common strategy for the next two years and recognizing each other as social partners.

As part of their own initiative to give a strong united voice to the sectors, encompassing a wide range of activities such as cleaning, cooking, gardening or taking care-related activities (family, elderly and children, disabled and the sick), [EFFAT](#), [EFFE](#), [EFSI](#) and [UNI Europa](#) -social partners in the PHS sectors- have agreed on the following objectives:

- 1- Engaging in the Upcoming EU Care Strategy** by promoting the recognition of the PHS sectors so that their contribution and needs are adequately considered in the forthcoming initiatives at the EU level.
- 2- Building Social Partners Capacity** by securing better national social dialogue representation, as key to elevate PHS workers' rights through collective bargaining and support PHS employers to achieve fair and safe workplaces.
- 3- Tackling Undeclared Work** in the PHS sectors through the participation and engagement in the devoted platforms as well as initiatives at the EU and/or national level by raising awareness on the most efficient procedures.
- 4- Addressing Occupational Health & Safety** by collecting best practicing, feeding into campaigns, research and partnerships with relevant stakeholders and agencies (EU-OSHA).
- 5- Securing Social protection** by assessing the effectiveness of EU legislative frameworks in protecting all PHS workers.
- 6- Fostering professionalisation of the sectors** by including PHS in the EU Skills agenda and similar initiatives.

The initiative paves the way towards increased value, recognition, and professionalization of an ever-growing and demanded sector which - while employing a vast number of almost 10 million - features some of the most precarious working conditions. At least one third of the total PHS labor pool is undeclared.

8.5 million workers are women, and more than half the total PHS workers are of migrant origin. These are striking figures, revealing a very diverse and fragmented industry that remains difficult to regulate.



Kristjan Bragason, EFFAT's General Secretary, said: *"The adoption of a new strategy is a very promising first step to ensure that millions of domestic workers in Europe, providing essential services to families while contributing to the economy, receive the valorisation, recognition and professionalisation they deserve. Ratification and implementation of ILO C189 and ensuring that PHS workers are covered by EU legislations are urgently needed."*

For Marie Beatrice Levaux, EFFE's President *"this two-years commitment will foster the recognition of the PHS sector at both EU and national levels. EFFE has worked actively for a decade now to defend private households as employers and is proud of this major achievement to reach a structured, qualified, affordable work sector guaranteeing decent working conditions and social rights for all PHS workers."*

Herwig Muyldermans, EFSI's President, welcomed *"the acknowledgment of each other's' representativeness as EU-level PHS Social Partners through the adoption of this common work-programme. For several years, EFSI has been actively committed to pursue a structured and stronger dialogue at EU level and this is a major step in the right direction". He now calls on the European Institutions "to grant PHS workers and employers the support they deserve in bringing PHS out of the shadows."*

UNI Europa Regional Secretary Oliver Roethig said: *This joint Work Programme is the product of our cooperation during the Covid-19 pandemic and before. The issues facing homecare and PHS workers can only be resolved by strong social dialogue at all levels. As Social Partners in PHS at the European level, we are committed to tackling undeclared work, labour exploitation and low collective bargaining coverage together. This Sectoral Social Dialogue is a great example of how different organisations can cooperate, shape the future of work and create equitable and sustainable solutions for employees, service providers and users alike.*

With the new strategy in place social partners will commit to regular meetings and will kick-off the first actions to achieve related objectives of their work program and address any further relevant challenges through solid sectoral advocacy.

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EFFAT is the **European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions**. As a European Trade Union Federation representing 120 national trade unions from 35 European countries, EFFAT defends the interests of more than 22 million workers employed along the food chain. EFFAT is a member of the ETUC and the European regional organisation of the IUF.

EFFE, the **European Federation for Family Employment & Homecare**, represents the interests of national stakeholders including social partners organisations (workers and employers) operating in the field of direct employment. This model is characterised by a contractual work relationship between two private individuals, without any trading or profit-making objective.

EFSI, the **European Federation for Services to Individuals**, is the voice of the Personal and Household Services industry at European 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.

UNI-Europa is the **European Trade Union Federation for 7 million service workers**. It speaks for the sectors that constitute the backbone of economic and social life in Europe. Headquartered in the heart of Brussels, UNI Europa represents 272 national trade unions in 50 countries, including: Commerce, Banking Insurance and Central Banks, Gaming, Graphical and Packaging, Hair and Beauty, Information and Communication Technology Services, Media, Entertainment and Arts, Postal Services and Logistics, Private Care and Social Insurance, Industrial Cleaning and Private Security, Professional Sport and Leisure, Professionals/Managers and Temporary Agency Workers.