



Press release: PHS Social Partners kick off project to strengthen collective bargaining.

Brussels, 07 July 2023 - On the 4th of July, the EU social partners in Personal and Household Services (PHS) – EFFAT, EFFE, EFISI and UNI Europa –launched their two-year EU co-financed project ‘PHSDialogue’.

The project aims to build an EU Social Dialogue and strengthen social partners’ capacity and collective bargaining in Personal and Household Services.

The COVID-19 pandemic underlined the structural weakness of EU Member States’ care systems as well as the essential role of care workers. Despite policymakers’ efforts to address these weaknesses and recognise care work, many challenges persist, chief among them low collective bargaining coverage, lack of trade union and employer representation.

This is crucial as Eurofound’s Industrial Relations landscape report acknowledged that Personal and Household (PHS) activities form an increasingly important part of the human health and social services. Meanwhile, the EU Care Strategy emphasised a shift to homecare services provision and different services provision models, which needs to go hand in hand with the creating an equal playing field and fair competition for all.

“Social dialogue is the foundation of progress and empowerment for domestic workers. By fostering constructive conversations between employers and trade unions through the PHS Social Dialogue project, we can address the challenges faced by domestic workers in the European Union, ensuring their rights, fair wages, and decent working conditions. Together, we are committed to transforming the sector and improving the lives of millions of workers and families in Europe,” said Kristjan Bragason EFFAT General Secretary.

“The launch of the PHSDialogue project is a continuation of EFISI’s long-term commitment to pursue a structured and stronger social dialogue towards granting PHS workers and employers the support they deserve and bringing them out of the shadows. The project will be instrumental in helping PHS trade associations and employers’ organisations to address topical issues for the sector and to reinforce their own capacity thanks to peer learning and knowledge building. This project is a key element in the structuring and recognition of the sector both at national and European level,” said Herwig Muyldermans, EFISI’s President.

“Homecare workers are essential. Over the next two years, we will strengthen the cooperation between employers and unions to build inclusive social dialogue structures that reflect the nature of the sector. Most importantly for us, it will help workers and their unions to strengthen collective bargaining in a fragmented industrial relations landscape,” said Oliver Roethig, Regional Secretary of UNI Europa.

“Our collaboration reaches a new step with the launch of the PHSDialogue project. I am confident it will help not only to improve social rights and working conditions for PHS workers too often invisible, but also to grant a broader access for household to home care services. For EFFE, strengthening representative’s organisations of families and people employing domestic & care workers is key to build a virtuous social dialogue,” said Marie Béatrice Levaux, EFFE’s President.



The project will engage in numerous activities, including:

- Map the key players in the PHS sectors
- Publish a Collective Bargaining & Social Dialogue report
- Create a PHS Employment Monitor
- Organise social dialogue meetings (2 working group meetings; 1 plenary session per year)
- Establish sectoral observatories at the national level
- Organizing workshops for unions
- Capacity-building workshops for employers organisations

The project is part of the commitment enshrined in the PHS social dialogue work programme for 2023/2024, and will be followed up with another project in 12 months' time.

For more information, please contact mark.bergfeld@uniglobalunion.org

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.