

Joint Statement. Brussels, 8th April 2024



Time for an ambitious European Long-Term Care Platform

Principle 18 of the European Pillar of Social Rights at the core of the EU Strategic Agenda 2024-2029

In view of the High-Level event of the Belgian presidency of the EU on the European Pillar of Social Rights taking place in La Hulpe on 15 and 16th April 2024, as well as the upcoming European elections, 16 European organisations call on EU policy makers to enhance the implementation of Pillar principle 18 on the right to long-term care under the next 2024-2029 legislature, starting with the creation of a European Long-Term Care Platform. This is an essential first step to coordinate the urgent measures needed to address underinvestment, inadequate social protection, lack of person-centredness and staff shortages in long-term care. Finally, in line with the call by the High-Level Group on the Future of Social Protection, long-term care must be supported by economic policies which prioritise care expenditure not as a cost, but as an investment to ensure sustainability of Europe's economy.¹

The Belgian Presidency of the EU, held in the first half of 2024, coincides with the ending of the 9th legislative term of the European Parliament and of the mandate of the Von der Leyen Commission. It also coincides with the EU Economic Governance Review and the beginning of the revision of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, that is foreseen to be completed for 2025. This puts the Presidency in a strategic position to take stock of the past and contribute to the setting of the agenda for the next term (2024-2029).

We warmly welcome the initiative of the Presidency to strengthen the European Pillar of Social Rights, and **we invite policy makers to put long-term care at the heart of their discussions, thus acknowledging the vital importance of care providers and receivers in our societies.** In line with Pillar Principle 18 on the right to long-term care, we have great expectations that this High-Level meeting in La Hulpe and its recommendations will inspire substantive actions across the European Union to ensure the full implementation of the [2022 Council Recommendation on access to affordable high-quality long-term care](#) in all Member States.

The Council Recommendation, and the broader European Care Strategy, form a common strategic framework that paves the way for the transformation of the care sector and the creation of a person-centred, community-based care and support system in all Member States. It lays the foundation for a system that will respect the rights and dignity of persons in need of care and support, and their families as well as carers, both professional and informal. This strategy needs to be fully and adequately

implemented to address EU Member States' realities through ambitious national measures to be submitted to the European Commission by June 2024. These national measures must be **appropriately funded, ambitious, time-bound, targeted and measurable** to improve the affordability, accessibility and quality of care services. They must expand home and community-based care options; consolidate support systems for informal carers; provide parents and families with freedom of choice regarding the care options that suit them best; support quality employment and fair working conditions; and finally, improve professionalisation and address care staff shortages.

We urgently call on the European Union to **set up a European Long-Term Care Platform under the next legislature as part of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan**. This Platform would gather national coordinators on long-term care, national and EU-level civil society organisations representing and supporting persons in need of care and their families, and service providers, as well as social partners. As organisations concerned with the well-being of persons who draw on care and support services, and service providers, we stand ready to support this process and to ensure the Platform contributes to an effective implementation of the Council Recommendation on Long-Term Care.

It is only through the establishment of such an enhanced formal dialogue with civil society and social partners that we can hope to achieve satisfactory monitoring of investments in long-term care, since civil society is in the best position to inform decision makers on how their policies are received by their targeted groups. The Platform should be a key channel for sharing of information about the European monitoring and evaluating procedures regarding national measures on long-term care; cross-sectoral working with EU funding programmes; following investments in long-term care via the European Semester process and Economic Governance Reform; as well as to develop practical guidelines for the development of human rights-based long-term care service models at local level.

Signatories:

AGE Platform Europe
Autism Europe
COFACE Families Europe
Caritas Europa
Eurocarers
Eurodiaconia
European Anti-Poverty Network
European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities
European Federation for Family Employment and Home Care
European Federation for Services to Individuals
European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions
European Public Service Unions
Make Mothers Matter
PICUM
Social Platform
UNI Europa