

PRESS RELEASE

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It is time for Italy to demonstrate it cares for its carers

[EUROCARERS](#) - the European network representing informal carers and their organisations – very much welcomes the Italian Senate’s intention to examine [a law proposal](#) aiming to address the needs of informal carers in the country. We consider that this broad political interest in the topic – and the public debate that is linked to it- is a first, long-overdue step in the right direction.

Eurocarers hopes that the proposal will build on the broad definition of informal care, which is now commonly used at European level: “a carer is a person who provides unpaid care to someone with a chronic illness, disability or other long-lasting health or care need, outside a professional or formal framework”. Given the numerous challenges posed by demographic ageing in all EU member states, limiting the definition of informal care to the specific context of a severe illness or disability would mean leaving behind a great number of people who provide daily care to people suffering from age-related or chronic diseases. This would not do justice and would not reflect the reality of the almost 4 million informal carers in Italy¹.

Moreover, in light of the ongoing shift towards community-based home-care services, Eurocarers invites policy makers to approach informal carers as a core component of people-centred care and as a key resource in the integration of social and health services.

Beyond that, Eurocarers underlines the need for a consistent, unified and multidisciplinary approach towards the challenges facing informal carers. Carers have the right to enjoy an enriching and fulfilling social and professional life and their opportunities to do so should not be restricted as a result of their caregiving responsibilities. In accordance with the principles defined in the EC proposal for an EU Pillar of social rights, Eurocarers therefore calls for the adoption of an appropriate mix of policy actions that ensure equal access to good-quality care services, while recognising and supporting carers through practical measures (e.g. access to information, training, respite care, etc.). Measures that allow carers to combine paid work and care in particular would not only help carers, and particularly women, to access and remain on the labour market but would also echo the [European Commission’s recommendations to the Italian government](#) as part of the European Semester process 2017.

Italy has a chance to join the small club of member states that have developed a legal status for carers and that value their contribution. Eurocarers hopes that Italy will realise this ambition. Disregarding the broad definition of informal care and the fundamental role of carers in our society would truly be a missed opportunity.

Eurocarers - in collaboration with the [European Parliament’s Interest Group on Informal carers](#) – will continue to advocate for the recognition and support of carers across Europe, convinced that policies

¹ OECD 2013



and practices to the emergence of a carer-friendly environment are beneficial to all: informal carers, patients, social protection systems and society as a whole.

End of press release

For further information, please contact the [Eurocarers Secretariat](#).

About Eurocarers

EUROCARERS is the European network representing informal carers and their organisations, irrespective of the particular age or health need of the person they are caring for.

Our aim is to advance the issue of informal care at both national and EU levels by:

- Raising awareness of the significant contribution made by carers to health and social care systems and the economy as a whole, and of the need to safeguard this contribution;
- Ensuring that EU and national policies take account of carers, i.e. promote social inclusion of carers, the development of support services for carers, enable them to remain active in paid employment and maintain a social life.

Eurocarers defines a carer as a person who provides care (usually unpaid) to someone with a chronic illness, disability or other long lasting health or care need, outside a professional or formal employment framework.