



Dear readers,

At a time when the European Union is facing considerable internal and external challenges, such as the Greek debt, the migration and refugee crisis, the forthcoming UK referendum on EU membership, growing security threats and an apparent inability to unite on major challenges, drawing the attention of policy-makers to the needs of informal carers requires a great deal of flexibility and creativity.

Yet, the role played by informal carers across the EU and the added value they bring to society as a whole superbly exemplify the ideals pursued by the founding fathers of the European construction. Carers indeed represent a substantial and growing proportion of the EU population (20% currently according to recent research), they embody the values of intergenerational solidarity and mutual help, they actively contribute to the principle of universal access to care (a basic human right and a fundamental feature of EU health care systems) and their estimated economic value and employment potential are enormous. Addressing the concerns of carers could therefore help to achieve the EU objectives in the fields of economic development, employment, social cohesion and integrated care. This should be seen as an eminently European task and should form part of any serious attempt to put the EU back on track.

These are the ambitions that the Eurocarers network tirelessly seeks to support and inform through its policy, communication and capacity-building activities. This first edition of our newsletter in 2016 provides you with specific examples of these efforts and highlights new potential opportunities and challenges that exist in the EU agenda. We sincerely hope that you will find this edition of our newsletter useful and interesting. As always, please feel free to come back to us with comments and suggestions should you have any!

Stecy Yghemonos,

Executive Director

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EU Policy Developments

The European Pillar of Social Rights - Frequently Asked Questions



On the 13th January 2016, the College of commissioners discussed the ongoing work on establishing a European Pillar of Social Rights. This initiative has been announced in President Juncker's State of the Union address in September 2015 and is foreseen in the Commission Work Programme for 2016

Why a European Pillar of Social Rights?

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2015 SPC Review of recent social policy reforms

The 2015 Report of the Social Protection Committee takes stock of recent social policy reforms in the EU. The report sheds light on the key challenges facing EU policymakers in the areas of social inclusion, poverty reduction, Roma inclusion, pensions, health care and long-term care needs, and analyses the reforms introduced to overcome them. It stresses the need for an integrated approach of social protection, covering a citizen's entire life course, from childbirth and related care through to education, training and employment, family and social life and finally retirement.



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Programme of the Netherlands Presidency of the Council



The Netherlands hold the Presidency of the Council of the EU since the 1st January and until the 30th June 2016. The main job of the Presidency is to mediate and seek compromises about decisions that the 28 EU member states have to make together. It also mediates between EU institutions like the Council of the EU, the European Commission and

the European Parliament.

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WHO-Europe: Will there be sufficient health professionals to meet future needs?

According to the latest WHO/Europe core health indicators for 2015, the number of physicians and nurses in the Region may not be sufficient to cover the future health needs of an ageing population, despite an increase of around 10% in the past 10 years. The report also points out that physicians in Europe are getting older: almost every third physician is over 55 years old.



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WHO: WHO's global survey on devices that matter most for the elderly and disabled



WHO has launched a global survey to gather views on the most necessary and useful assistive technologies such as hearing aids and wheel chairs. The survey will feed into the first ever WHO mandated list of essential assistive technologies to provide a tool for governments. Governments can use the list to plan and focus efforts to help populations acquire the 50 priority products, thereby improving the everyday lives of the elderly and people living with disabilities.

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Will the European Funds for Strategic Investments (EFSI) support Social Services?

The Juncker Commission's top priority is "to get Europe growing again and to increase the number of jobs without creating new debt". The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) – the heart of the Investment Plan for Europe - and European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) are both supposed to play a crucial role in creating jobs and growth.



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Ready for the Demographic Revolution? Measuring Active Ageing



Across the EU, the number of older people is increasing – particularly fast, when it comes to people over 80 – and the number of young and working-age people is decreasing. Many regard this as a problem, particularly if they see older people as a burden.

This view is unjustifiably negative and, during the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, the Commission started supporting the development of a measure of active ageing, or the extent to which older people are not a burden on the rest of society.

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EC: Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth 2016

The Convention brings together policy makers and civil society to discuss what the EU can do to ensure that all citizens reap the benefits of truly inclusive growth.

The EU needs to step up its efforts to develop, along with Member States, long-term solutions to improve its social dimension by

- fighting against poverty
- reducing unemployment
- making sure no one is left behind



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Position of the European Trade Union Confederation on first-stage consultation of the EU social partners on a 'New start' for work-life balance



Good work-life balance has a positive impact on the well-being of workers. It can also contribute to achieving major EU policy goals: stimulating employment (especially among women and older workers) and growth; promoting children and youth development; and eventually achieving gender equality.

It is high time that the EU takes action to promote upward convergence among Member States on work-life balance.

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EC conference on employment and social developments

On January 21 2015, the European Commission held its annual conference on the employment and social developments in the EU during the year. The conference was organised into four panels with presentations of different chapters of the report, followed by a discussion between panellists. The conference's keynote speech was delivered by Commissioner Thyssen. Please find a summary of the conference below.



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ECOFIN: Healthcare and ageing-related expenditure on the agenda of future Eurogroup meetings

The Eurogroup met in Brussels on the 11th February to exchange views on the economic situation in the euro area, based on the European Commission's presentation of its 2016 winter economic forecast. The Eurogroup is an informal body where the ministers of the euro area member states discuss matters relating to their shared responsibilities related to the euro.

Ministers agreed that it is important to make public spending more efficient to enhance the euro area's potential for economic growth.



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New report on Integrated social services in Europe - A study looking at how

local public services are working together to improve people's lives

The objective of this report published by the European Social Network (one of Eurocarers fellow EaSI-funded partners) is to analyse how social services provide integrated support with other public services, namely education, employment and health, across Europe. The report consists of an overview of recent welfare developments, a summary of legislation and policy frameworks across European countries, a literature review of 60 international articles on service integration, and an assessment of 44 practice examples from 17 European countries.



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COCIR eHealth Summit: Making Healthcare Systems More Sustainable through Integrated Care

The second annual COCIR eHealth Summit took place on the 27th January 2016 in Brussels, Belgium, in cooperation with the European Commission and in partnership with European Hospital and Healthcare Foundation (HOPE) and the European Patients Forum (EPF). This year high level speakers and participants shared their insights on integrated care as a response to some of the most pressing challenges currently faced by healthcare systems.



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Moving from the AFE-INNOVNET Thematic Network to the EU Covenant on Demographic Change

After two years of hard work, the EU-funded AFE-INNOVNET Thematic Network is very happy to pass the torch on to the European Covenant on Demographic Change. The Covenant is set to become the new EU-wide association gathering local, regional and national authorities, civil society organisations, universities, and businesses that commit to cooperate and implement evidence-based solutions to support active and healthy ageing as a comprehensive answer to Europe's demographic challenge.



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Research in Action

Unlocking the Potential of Young Black and Minority Ethnic Young Carers in Europe; pan-European Research Launch

The findings of the first phase of the landmark Erasmus+ funded, pan-European youth-led project "Care2Work" were launched at an international Conference entitled "Barriers Understood"- Young BME Carers in Europe that was held on 10 February 2016 in Carpi, Italy.



The conference brought together over 110 researchers, policy makers, youth professionals and employment agencies representatives from across Europe to discuss the long-term implications of caring on young people's personal and professional development with particular focus on youth from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds.



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Eurofound: Boosting access to healthcare in times of crisis



The economic crisis has had a profound effect on people's lives, not least in the area of health. Public spending on healthcare has been frozen or cut; in some respects, citizens' health has deteriorated; and accessing healthcare has become more difficult. In response to this, many public authorities and service providers are attempting to ease the impact of the crisis by maintaining access for all to quality healthcare.

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Eurofound: Survey shows diverse picture of Europe at work, with positive developments

The sixth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) presents the diverse picture of Europe at work over time across countries, occupations, gender and age groups. The findings underline the complex reality with which Europe's policymakers are confronted as they seek to build a fair and competitive Europe. The findings draw attention to the range and scope of actions that policy actors could develop to address today's challenges.



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Care ideals in the Netherlands: Shifts between 2002 and 2011



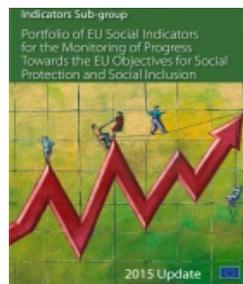
The Canadian Journal on Aging published a new study on the care shifts that took place in the Netherlands between 2002 and 2011. The study's premise was that normative care beliefs can inform the current care policy debate. The authors conducted latent class regression analyses on two waves of Netherlands Kinship Panel Study data to distinguish care ideals that captured multiple dimensions of normative care beliefs simultaneously.

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Portfolio of EU Social Indicators for the Monitoring of Progress Towards the EU Objectives for Social Protection and Social Inclusion

This publication reflects the 2015 update of the portfolio of EU social indicators as developed by the Social Protection Committee and especially its Indicators Sub-Group. The indicators aim at monitoring progress towards the EU objectives for

social protection and social inclusion. In addition to a list of overarching indicators, four sets of indicators focus on specific topics: social inclusion, pensions, healthcare and long-term care, and child poverty and wellbeing.



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EC: the call for Reference Sites of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing is open



Are you a leader in innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing? Would you like to become one of the "Reference sites" of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing? Then apply before 15 April 2016!

What are Reference Sites?

Reference Sites are highly inspirational ecosystems, delivering creative and workable solutions that improve the lives and health of older people. These solutions can be scaled-up and replicated across the EU.

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ENS4Care - Final eHealth Guidelines presented to policy-makers

Partners of the ENS4Care project presented the final guidelines for the deployment of eHealth by nurses and social workers to policy-makers on 8 December 2015 at the European Innovation Summit. The acceptance of eHealth by health and social care professionals is fundamental in order for it to be taken up successfully across Europe.



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Events and Calls for proposals

DG CNECT: H2020 Social Challenges: ICT for Health, demographic change and well-being

The call for proposals under the Work Programme 2016-2017 of Societal Challenge 1 "Health, demographic change and wellbeing" of Horizon 2020 is open.

There are €178 million available through this call. New areas addressed in this Work Programme are big data for public health policies, digital health literacy, digital security of health related data, smart living environments for ageing well



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Experts wanted for EU applied research and innovation programme in the field of ICT-based solution for ageing well

The ADI Association needs independent experts for



The AAL Association needs independent experts for the AAL Programme, the renewed € 700 million applied research and innovation programme in the field of ICT-based solutions for ageing well jointly undertaken by several Member States with the participation of the Union. The call for interest is launched now and will remain open until 2020. As well as attracting the best specialists of business in the field of ICT for ageing well, the AAL Association wants to boost the number of experts in the area of end-users integration in the context of AAL.

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ICARE4EU Symposium

On 22 March, the EU funded project 'Innovating Care for people with multiple chronic conditions in Europe' (ICARE4EU) is organising a final symposium on European perspectives on care for people with multiple chronic conditions in Brussels. Eurocarers served as an advisor to this project that studied the innovation of care for people with multiple chronic conditions.



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Czech Republic - Conference on informal care at the End of Life



The Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, the Centre for Support of Family Carers and a Eurocarers member is organising the conference on Informal (family) Care at the End of Life. The conference will take place on 18th May, 2016 in Brno, Czech Republic in the premises of the South Moravian Regional Authority. The conference will gather experts from the field of health and social services and will focus on the issues of supporting families, accompanying and spiritual care at the end of life. The Eurocarers network will be represented by Stecy Yghemonos and all members of the Eurocarers network are welcome to attend the event.

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Medical apps: mainstreaming innovation

Date: Thursday 7 April 2016

Venue: Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street - London

This is the fourth annual event run by the Royal Society of Medicine and the Telemedicine & eHealth Section, on medical apps. As each of the previous three have been sell-outs, this year the event has moved to a larger auditorium and has further upped the quality of speakers



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Meeting the new Director of the Fundamental Rights Agency



On 25 January 2016, Eurocarers participated to a meeting with Michael O'Flaherty, the new Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA),



organized by the Social Platform. FRA has to maintain close relations with civil society to achieve its goals, stressed Mr O'Flaherty; this network of friends and stakeholders increases FRA's ability to impact on and improve individual lives. In consultation with its Advisory Panel, FRA is currently reviewing its Fundamental Rights Platform – its network of over 400 civil society organisations – to make its structures more inclusive to civil society.

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News from the network

Carers for people affected by mental health problems: joint meeting of the Interest Groups on Carers and Mental Health

On 12 January, the European Parliament Interest Group on Carers and the Interest Group on Mental Health, Well-being and Brain Disorders held a joint meeting (organised by Eurocarers and gamIAN-Europe), addressing the issues faced by carers providing care to people affected by mental health disorders.

Basis for the meeting was EUFAMI's recent survey on this topic, carried out by carried out by LUCAS, the Centre for Care Research and Consultancy of the University of Leuven.



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Young carers across the EU must receive specific attention



Young carers are children and young people under the age of 18 who provide care for a parent or relative in the community, usually within their own home. They can perform the most personal and intimate of tasks for their parents or other family members, often without any help or support from welfare agencies. Many children provide care at great personal expense - they are deprived of their childhood, many miss out on educational opportunities, few have established friendships or other support networks.

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Looking for young carers in Finland

"A child or young person aged under 18 who has a significant role in looking after someone else who is experiencing illness or disability" is the definition of young carers used in Scotland. The Central Association of Carers in Finland is about to start looking if such children exist in Finland in the new project Youngsters – Young Carers in Finland (2016-2018). Finland's Slot Machine Association provides the funding.



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France – Projet de loi relative à l'adaptation de la société au vieillissement

Le ministre des affaires sociales et de la santé et la



La ministre des affaires sociales et de la santé et la secrétaire d'État auprès de la ministre des affaires sociales et de la santé, chargée de la famille, des personnes âgées et de l'autonomie ont présenté un projet de loi relatif à l'adaptation de la société au vieillissement. Ce projet de loi a été élaboré à l'issue d'une large concertation auprès de l'ensemble des acteurs concernés. Il a fait l'objet d'un avis du Conseil économique, social et environnemental.

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Ireland – Family Carers Ireland's Merger Story and pre-election manifesto

Towards the end of 2015, two Eurocarers member associations from Ireland, The Carers Association and Caring for Carers, completed a merger. The new organisation, Family Carers Ireland, was officially launched on January 13th 2016. Family Carers Ireland will continue to provide existing services offered by the two constituent organisations, including training; support services; respite care; respite weekend breaks; nurse-led clinics; a dedicated helpline for family carers; research and policy development; and assistance with legal/mediation services.



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Scotland - Carers Bill Passed by Parliament



The Carers (Scotland) Bill was passed on 4 February 2016. The Bill will become an Act following Royal Assent (4 weeks from the date it was passed) and it is expected it will be implemented from April 2017.

The Carers Bill introduces a new framework for recognising and supporting carers. Alongside this it provides carers with new rights and entitlements, such as a universal right to information, advice and a carers support plan and the right to support, based on eligibility criteria.

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Canada - Dementia Video Series- A focus on Caregiving and the Risk of Social Isolation

On January 20, 2016, Canada's Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, officially released a Dementia Video Series in recognition of Alzheimer Awareness Month.

Please find below the web links to the official press release and video series on the Government website as well as the links to the videos on YouTube.



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European Patients' Forum position paper on equal treatment for patients in education and in employment

Integration of patients with chronic conditions into the

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Integration of patients with chronic conditions into the job market is a widespread issue, starting from a young age. To realise the goals of Europe 2020 for inclusive growth, it is essential to address the barriers and obstacles that patients face in education, accessing jobs, staying employed, and returning to work. This is why the European Patients' Forum (a Eurocarers partner) has been committed to combating discrimination on the ground of illness and to addressing health inequalities from the perspective of patients since its beginnings.

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Eurocarers Workshop on Supporting working carers in Europe

As part of its rolling annual programme of activities and building on the success of its first study visit, Eurocarers organised a workshop on "Supporting working carers", on 3-4 March 2016, in London. The event –hosted by Carers UK - aimed to discuss recent EU and national policy developments, promising research outcomes as well as good practices on the topic. It also allowed participants to identify future research needs to be explored by the Eurocarers network or other stakeholders. Some 20 representatives from 9 countries took part in the event, a sign of the interest and expertise of Eurocarers members in the topic.



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Smartcare - Visit to the Estonian deployment site in Tallinn



February saw the Eurocarers representative on the Smartcare User Advisory Board (UAB) visit the Estonian deployment site in Tallinn.

The study was based on the provision of remote integrated health and social care to elderly people. The elderly were chosen among those suffering from a chronic disease such as heart failure, diabetes and/or COPD.

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Greece - Program Train the trainers

On the 19-20th of December 2015 Alzheimer Hellas, in collaboration with Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) launched in Greece a pilot training program for caregivers and health professionals. The program "Train the trainers" aims at training 1.000 caregivers and 600 health professionals all over Greece. The training focuses on a person centered approach that will provide the trainees with practical guidelines for the caregiving of a person with dementia.



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