



Dear readers,

This last edition of our newsletter before the summer break will provide you with the latest information about the EU institutions' activities and data on active and healthy ageing as well as with links to promising technology-based solutions for eHealth and independent living. I would particularly like to draw your attention to the article on the "European Structural and Investment Funds for Health" project which aims to promote the effective use of structural funds and highlight funding opportunities for health in a user-friendly way. The structural funds indeed offer a lot of potential for the future of integrated and patient-centred care services – and therefore for the recognition and support of informal carers. As such, they will definitely form part of the political dossiers that we intend to monitor and further investigate in the future.

The past three months have been exceptionally rich in research activities. The newly-established Eurocarers Research working group has indeed met four times (two of which face to face in Dublin and Brussels) and produced a very ambitious research priorities document, to be presented at our upcoming AGM in Gothenburg on the 3rd September 2015. The document highlights our research priorities and identifies the gaps in knowledge in the areas of care, carers and caring at EU, national and regional level. It will not only act as a catalyst for more cohesive and strategic collaborative work by Eurocarers' members but serve as a tool to proactively influence relevant research agendas. A summary of the working group's latest meeting is also available in this newsletter.

The next edition of our newsletter will be circulated at the end of September but in the meantime, I wish you – on behalf of the secretariat – a very relaxing summer.

Stecy Yghemonos

Executive Director

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EU Policy Developments

Council addresses gender gap in pensions



Meeting in Brussels on 18 June, Ministers responsible for social affairs adopted a set of conclusions addressing 'Equal income opportunities for women and men: Closing the gender gap in pensions'.

Background to these conclusions is the recognition that promoting equal economic independence for women and men is crucial for ensuring gender equality.

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European Commission planning a Joint Action on Frailty

Joint Actions are a funding instrument under the third EU Health Programme 2014-2020. They are designed and financed by Member State authorities and the EU to address specific priorities under the EU Health Programme. They have a clear EU added value and are co-financed either by competent authorities that are responsible for health in the Member States (e.g. Health Ministries) or in the third countries participating in the Programme, or by public sector bodies and non-governmental bodies mandated by those competent authorities.



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2015 Ageing Report warns of growing cost of ageing population



On 12 May the European Commission published the 2015 Ageing Report, which presents economic and budgetary projections for the 28 EU member states for the period 2013-2060. This is the fifth Ageing Report produced by the EC since 2001. It feeds into important policy debates including the Europe 2020 Strategy, the European Semester and the assessment of the stability of public finances required under the Stability and Growth Pact.

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Synthesis report - The Active Ageing Index and its extension to the regional level

The European Commission has published a synthesis report from the Peer Review "The Active Ageing Index and its extension to the regional level" focused on the usefulness of the Active Ageing Index in terms of policy making. Participants from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Romania, Slovenia and Spain gathered in Poland in October 2014.



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6th International Carers Conference - Care and caring: future proofing the new demographics



How we manage care and caring in the face of demographic change increasingly dominates social policy, research and practice. The 6th International Carers Conference – to be held from 3rd – 6th September 2015 in Gothenburg, Sweden and co-hosted by the Swedish Family Care Competence Centre, Carers Sweden and Carers UK – will challenge the international community to take a fresh look at an enduring issue. Caring is everybody's business!

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Innovation for Active & Healthy Ageing

The first European Summit on Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing took place in Brussels on 9 and 10 March 2015. Over 1400 leaders from government, civil society, investment and finance, industry and academia discussed how Europe can transform demographic change into opportunities for economic growth and social development. The event was organized by the European Commission in collaboration with the Active and Assisted Living (AAL) Programme, AGE Platform Europe, the European Connected Health Alliance (ECHAAlliance) and Knowledge for Innovation (K4I).



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New on the Commission agenda: multi-morbidity



The European Commission's Health department (DG SANTE) has identified multi-morbidity as a priority area and will hold the 1st Conference on multi-morbidity on October 8th. This event will serve to assess to assess how Europe could address this increasing challenge as society becomes older.

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Health care reforms and the crisis

This report, developed by the European Social Observatory and published by the European Trade Union Institute, looks at the impact of the crisis on health care reform patterns in ten EU countries (France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Romania, Sweden and the UK-England). It assesses the changing allocation of responsibilities for regulation, financing, and provision of health care, as well as the growing influence of EU governance on national health systems.



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COCIR launches the annual 5th Edition of its eHealth Toolkit



COCIR, the European Trade Association representing the medical imaging, health ICT and electromedical industries, just launched the newest edition of its annual eHealth Toolkit, subtitled 'Integrated Care: Breaking the Silos'. This year's toolkit focuses on the value of Integrated Care, the challenges in implementing it and how health ICT technologies and procurement possibilities can facilitate it.

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What do patients and carers need in health apps - but are not getting?

Despite the huge and obvious potential of health apps to support patient self-care and reduce the drain on healthcare systems – their use has yet to move into mainstream medicine and public health programmes aimed at disease prevention. The lack of user involvement is one of the major reasons why health apps have failed to deliver thus far: what do patients and carers need in health apps - but are not getting? And how can developers respond and deliver better apps accordingly?



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Report on good employment and social protection practices

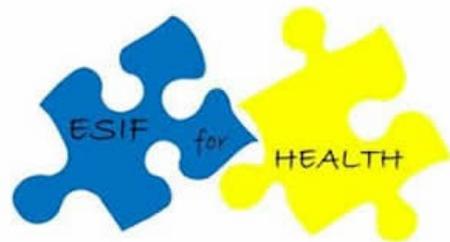
The European Commission recently published a report in which it monitored good practices across Europe in the areas of employment, social affairs and inclusion. This exercise was performed in the context of the EU's Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI).



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Commission launches tool to support Member States in using European Structural and Investment Funds for effective health investments

As part of the project "ESIF for Health" co-financed by the EU Health Programme, the consultancy firm EY has prepared a guide and a toolkit to support Member States use structural funds more efficiently for health. An online platform has been launched to provide these tools to relevant stakeholders.



While health is a key sector for support under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for the 2014-2020 programming period, many health stakeholders in Member States may find EU funding mechanisms difficult to understand and navigate.

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WHO - Assessing chronic disease management in European health systems: country reports

Many countries are exploring innovative approaches to redesign delivery systems to provide appropriate support to people with long-standing health problems. Central to these efforts to enhance chronic care are approaches that seek to better bridge the boundaries between professions, providers and institutions, but, as this study clearly demonstrates, countries have adopted differing strategies to design and implement such approaches.



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WHO - Building primary care in a changing Europe: case studies

This new volume, published by the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, consists of structured case studies summarizing the state of primary care in 31 European countries. It complements the previous study, Building primary care in a changing Europe, in which we provided an overview of the state of primary care across the continent, including aspects of governance, financing, workforce and details of service profiles.



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Strengthening health system accountability: a WHO European Region multi-country study

This report takes stock of the measures that Member States of the WHO European Region have put in place to strengthen health system accountability since the Tallinn Charter: Health Systems for Health and Wealth (2008) and the Health 2020 policy framework (2012) were adopted. These last years have been undoubtedly marked by significant challenges facing the health systems in the Region, including international and national environments affected by an economic crisis, increased health needs, as well as resource scarcity.



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Research in Action

How digital competence development brings better care services: the CARER+ project

Care workers and carers are the missing link between the digital tools and elder people. The project CARER+ proved this hypothesis right. The project trained and enhanced the digital skills and competences of care workers and carers across Europe, making the home care service they deliver better. The project's programme also improved the professionalisation and job opportunities of the participants. As a result, elder people can acquire ICT competences and become familiar with ICT tools and devices, thus supporting their active ageing and a better quality of life.



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Help showcase the best ICT-enabled social innovations in Europe



The Young Foundation and the Zentrum für Soziale Innovation on behalf of the European Commission's JRC-IPTS are gathering evidence to support the European Commission's DG EMPL and EU Member States in the reform of their social protection systems: we need your help to collect sound cases of successful ICT-enabled social innovation and understand how they can be better sustained at the local, national and European level.

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Report on case studies of the technology-based services for independent living for older people

The Joint Research Centre, Institute for Prospective Technological Studies, just released a Report on case studies of the technology-based services for independent living for older people. The report elaborates five case studies of good practices of technology-enabled services for independent living of older adults at home from the 14 obtained in the deliverable 1 of the ICT-AGE project.



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Technology-enabled services for older people living at home independently: Lessons for public long-term care authorities in the EU Member States



This report presents six policy lessons that could help public authorities at all levels of the EU Member States for use new technologies in long-term care service provision for older people. These policy lessons have come out of the ICT-AGE research project carried out by the JRC-IPTS and funded by DG EMPL, based on the cross-analysis of good practices in technology-enabled services to help older people live independently at home.

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Largest global mHealth research study reveals top five mHealth countries in Europe

The unprecedented spread of mobile technologies as well as advancements in their innovative application to address health priorities has evolved into a new field of eHealth, known as mHealth or mobile health. mHealth involves the use and capitalization on a mobile phone's core utility of voice and short messaging service (SMS) as well as more complex functionalities and applications including general packet radio service (GPRS), third and fourth generation mobile telecommunications (3G and 4G systems), global positioning system (GPS), and Bluetooth technology.



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Improved mobility and faster recovery for stroke patients



A person who has suffered a stroke very often faces a long rehabilitation. Under the EU Research and Innovation programme Horizon H2020, the RETRAINER project will use robot-based technologies to speed up the rehabilitation and allow the users to use their own arm and hand as much and as soon as possible after the trauma so to achieve the best outcomes in the rehabilitation.

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Movement sensor device improves life quality for Parkinson's patients

A small sensor, headphones and a mobile phone - the elements of a prototype kit that is giving hope of relief for sufferers of Parkinson's disease. The European-backed research project being spearheaded in Barcelona does not offer a cure for the degenerative condition, but it could improve the quality of life of patients and give them more autonomy.



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Second meeting of the Eurocarers Research Working Group



On the 17th of June, Eurocarers held the second meeting of its Research Working Group, in Brussels. The event brought together twelve Eurocarers members involved in research, as well as a representative of the European Commission.

The Eurocarers Research Working Group aims to:

- Create a vibrant and sustainable research community, by stimulating the creation and sharing of different forms of knowledge and expertise among members;

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Events and Calls for proposals

Work Programme 2015 of the 3rd Health Programme

The Work Programme 2015 of the 3rd Health Programme has been published on 2 June 2015. The programme sets out the priorities and actions to be undertaken, including the allocation of resources, to implement the third Programme of the Union's action in the field of health (2014-2020).

The call for proposals for projects under the 2015 work programme has been published on 5 June 2015 and the deadline for submissions is set for 15 September - 17:00 (Brussels time).



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News from the network

Eurocarers launches CarICT, an online directory of ICT-based services for informal carers

This online directory brings together successful or promising examples of ICT-based solutions targeted at informal carers. The objective of this directory is to maximise the dissemination of existing good practices and to raise awareness about these among end-users (i.e. carers and older people) and stakeholders.



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European Observatory: call for good practices



ENSACT, the European Network for Social Action, hosts the European Observatory which aims at monitoring, reporting and disseminating the contributions of social work and social development in building a 'society for all'. In which every individual has an active role to play within a fair and just world. ENSACT calls on social work practitioners, educators, policy makers and researchers to send their experiences and practices on this year's theme 'Promoting the Dignity and Worth of Peoples'. Mavisie supports this Call.

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Greece - Living with Mental Illness in the Family

I read stories from relatives of people with mental illness, and their main concern is the many problems that arise with the onset of the illness—the crisis it causes in the family, the first hospitalization in a psychiatric clinic, feelings of hopelessness, depression and despair.

Anyone who has lived with a person with mental illness has experienced all of the above. I wouldn't be writing these words if the onset of my sister's illness 20 years ago had not affected my family to such a great degree.



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Care Alliance Ireland - Family Carer Research Group Meeting



On Wednesday 3 June, 24 researchers and those with an interest in Family Carer research from Ireland gathered in the Carmichael Centre, Dublin hosted by Care Alliance Ireland as part of the renewal of the Family Carer Research Group. The group was delighted to have a chance to hear from Prof. Sue Yeandle, Director of the Centre for International Research on Care Labour and Equalities (CIRCLE) at the University of Leeds; Dr. Paula Devine, Deputy Director of the ARK (Access, Research, Knowledge) Ageing Programme; and Prof. Gillian Robinson, Ulster Co-ordinator of ARK.

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MYSELF – More You Care in Estonia, Latvia, Finland

Project MYSELF is funded by The Nordic Council of Ministers and brings together NGO Estonian Carers from Estonia, Association Saulstarini from Latvia and The Central Association of Carers in Finland. Project activities started in June 2014 and concluded in June 2015.

The aim of this project is to initiate cooperation between the organisations from three countries and advance the issues of informal carers nationally and on the international level.



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Italy - DA ME A TE Project – Cultural mediation for the BME carers' supports



“Da Me a Te project – cultural mediation for the BME carers’ support”, financed in the framework of the European Immigration Fund – Action 6, 2013, has been implemented between March and June 2015 in the Terre d’Argine Area (Northern Italy, within Modena Province), by the following partners: Terre d’Argine Municipalities Union, Anziani e non solo cooperative society with a large expertise in developing initiatives in favour of informal and professional carers and Caleidos, working in the sector of cultural and linguistic mediation.

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EuroCarers, Eurocarers – European Association Working for Carers, 3, Rue Abbé Cuyper, 1040 Brussels,
Phone 0032 (0)2 741 24 05, Email info@eurocarers.org, Web www.eurocarers.org