

### **Universal Children's Day: young carers deserve full enjoyment of their rights!**

Today the international community celebrates Universal Children's Day. The 20<sup>th</sup> of November also marks the anniversary of the date when the UN General Assembly adopted both the [Declaration](#) and the [Convention on the rights of the child](#).

On this special day, [Eurocarers](#) would like to draw the attention of relevant policy-makers and stakeholders on the need to promote and respect the rights of a particularly vulnerable and yet largely invisible category of children<sup>i</sup>: young carers.

Young carers are children and young persons under 18 who provide or intend to provide care, assistance or support to another family member who is disabled, has some chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition (such as an addiction) connected with a need for care, support or supervision. Young carers undertake significant or substantial caring tasks, ranging from household activities, physical and personal care, emotional support and supervision, helping to give medicine, managing the family budget. They assume a level of responsibility that would usually be associated with an adult.

**If not adequately supported, young carers can find themselves unable to fully enjoy the rights they should be entitled to.**

Caring responsibilities can indeed have a negative impact on young carers' **right to education**<sup>ii</sup>. The failure in identifying young carers and tailoring education at school to their needs leads to under-achievement, absence and drop-outs. Lower educational qualifications and attitudes towards higher education will result in lower employability in the long-term.

The **right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health**<sup>iii</sup> is also at stake. Young carers are at risk of mental ill-health due to their caring situation, and especially among high-intensity young carers. Many struggle to manage their education, working life and caring role which can cause pressure and stress.

Young carers face difficulties in enjoying their **right to leisure and play**<sup>iv</sup>. As a result of their caring responsibilities, young carers may have less dedicated time for personal development and leisure, as well as difficulties in integrating with other pupils.

Being a young carer should not be a ground for discrimination in the enjoyment of human rights<sup>v</sup>. States have a responsibility to take all available measures to make sure children's rights are respected<sup>vi</sup> and the lack of positive actions to support young carers can be considered as a failure to protect and promote their rights.

Therefore, Eurocarers calls on policy makers to introduce specific positive actions to ensure that young carers' rights (including the right to education, to the highest attainable standard of health, to play, to express their views<sup>vii</sup> and to information<sup>viii</sup>) are respected, protected and fulfilled.

To know more about the measures to support young carers, as well as on the economic interest of States in doing so, please refer to the [Eurocarers Policy paper on young carers](#).

END of the Press Release

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

### 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.

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.

### Eurocarers current activities on young carers

Eurocarers has recently established a Young Carers Working Group, bringing together young carers, former young carers, as well as young carers organisations. The working group is intended as a platform for a joint effort towards a common aim: policies and practices at national and European level that take in consideration carer's needs.

Eurocarers is part of the Erasmus+ Project **Innovative School Education Methodologies and Tools for Guaranteeing Social Inclusion of Young Carers (EDY-CARE)**. The EDY-CARE project aims to empower teachers and other school staff in upper secondary education to recognise adolescent young carers in classes and maximize their learning opportunities, while ensuring their social inclusion. By making innovative educational methodologies and training available to school staff, EDY-CARE can contribute to the promotion of young carers-friendly school environments.

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<sup>i</sup> According to the Convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC), "a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier" (art. 1).

<sup>ii</sup> Article 28 of the UNCRC refers to achievement of right to education on the basis of equal opportunity and explicitly states the obligation for States to make higher education accessible to all and to take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

<sup>iii</sup> UNCRC, Article 24 and 6 (right to develop healthily).

<sup>iv</sup> UNCRC, Article 31.

<sup>v</sup> Cfr. UNCRC, art. 2: States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

<sup>vi</sup> UNCRC, Article 4.

<sup>vii</sup> UNCRC, Article 12.

<sup>viii</sup> UNCRC, Article 17.