



Dear readers,

This last edition of our newsletter before the summer break will provide you with the latest information about the EU institutions' initiatives and data with relevance to our core mission. I would particularly like to draw your attention to the articles concerning the European Semester and the EC proposal for a European Pillar of Social Rights which offer great potential to advocate for the recognition of carers across Europe. As always, the Semester – and EC recommendations to the member states - includes very convincing economic arguments that underline the need for a combination of support and emancipating measures to prevent the negative impact of caregiving on the carer's life. The European Pillar of Social Rights puts forward a set of very ambitious proposals – paid carer's leave, investment in community-based care systems, flexible working arrangements, incentives to address the pension gap, etc. – that would greatly contribute to the implementation of our key principles. This is the reason why the Pillar was the theme addressed during our latest Carers Interest Group meeting at the European Parliament. The Pillar nicely reflects our collective advocacy work over the last few months but we now need to make sure that the Parliament and Council will endorse and implement it.

The past few weeks have been exceptionally rich in networking and communication activities. Our active participation in the Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth gave us the chance to draw attention to the barriers and success factors which may impact on young carers' ability to fully participate in society due to health or social problems. The 2nd International Young Carers Conference in Malmö, which we were honoured to co-host, also allowed to emphasise the situation of young carers and the good practices that exist to address their specific needs. A summary of all of these developments - and more - is also available in this newsletter.

The next edition of our newsletter will be circulated at the end of September so, on behalf of the secretariat, I already want to wish you a very good and relaxing summer.

Stecy Yghemonos,

Executive Director

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EU Policy Developments

European Semester 2017 Spring Package: Commission issues country-specific recommendations



On 22 May 2017, the European Commission presented its 2017 Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs), setting out its economic policy guidance for individual Member States for the next 12 to 18 months. The economy in the EU and the euro area is proving resilient, but challenges, such as slow productivity growth, the legacies of the crisis – including persisting inequalities – and uncertainty arising mostly from external factors continue.

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DG SANTE - EU process of economic cooperation highlights need for effective and accessible health systems

The 2017 Country Specific Recommendations, which include health-related ones, are delivered each year in the context of cycle of Economic Policy coordination in the EU, the so-called "European Semester". The need for health systems reforms have been identified in several countries since the beginning of the European Semester process, and this year, several Member States received recommendations to reform their health systems to correspond with the priorities set by the European Commission.



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EPHA - Tightly focused, but inconsistencies remain: Health in the 2017 country specific recommendations (CSRs)



On 22 May the European Commission released the [2017 country specific recommendations](#) (CSRs), signalling the final stage of the annual European Semester cycle. EPHA has been monitoring and engaging with the Semester since its introduction in 2011, advocating for a re-framing of economic policy coordination that understands health as a pre-requisite for jobs, growth and sustainability. Whilst the 2017 CSRs continue the [streamlining process](#) that has focused and strengthened more recent cycles of the Semester, they also retain many of the

inconsistencies of previous years.

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The European Commission presents the European Pillar of Social Rights: Building a fairer Europe and strengthening its social dimension is a key priority for this Commission

On 26 April 2017, the European Commission has adopted a proposal for the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Pillar sets out 20 key principles and rights to support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems. The Pillar is designed as a compass for a renewed process of upward convergence towards better working and living conditions in Europe. It is primarily conceived for the euro area but applicable to all EU Member States wishing to be part of it.



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EP Plenary - European Pillar of Social Rights



On April 26, the European Parliament heard the Commission's presentation on the decision adopted on the European Pillar of Social Rights and work-life balance initiative during its plenary session in Brussels. Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the European Commission, said that *the EU is not a market or a currency, those are instruments. It is not about just consumers, but about citizens. Real people trying to make a living through schools, struggling for a better future. I think Europe has a role in strengthening the rights of all our people*, he argued.

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Stakeholders' reaction to the European Pillar of Social Rights and accompanying initiatives

The European Pillar of Social Rights and the accompanying initiatives have met the favour of many stakeholders.

Eurocarers welcomed the proposal on “[Work-Life balance for working parents and carers](#)” in a Joint Statement “[Europe sides with people- Coalition of EU NGOs endorses European Commission's comprehensive Work-Life Balance Package](#)”.



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Eurofound - International Day of Families – Spotlight on work-life balance



Work-life balance is a satisfactory state of equilibrium between an individual's work and private life.

Enabling a better work-life balance for workers across the life course has been an EU policy goal for many years as it is central to ensuring that work is sustainable for all.

On 26 April 2017, the Commission launched the [European Pillar of Social Rights package](#).

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Eurofound - Living and working in Europe 2016

Living and working in Europe, Eurofound's 2016 yearbook, provides a snapshot of developments and trends in the work and lives of Europeans as described in the research activities of Eurofound over 2016. Despite the strains on the European Union – slow economic recovery, rising euro-scepticism and the UK vote to leave the EU – Eurofound's work reported much good news for its citizens in 2016. Full-time, permanent employment rose across all pay categories; the gender employment gap is narrowing and policy could narrow it further;



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Estonian Presidency - Political calendar July-December 2017



At a cabinet meeting on 3 May 2017, the government agreed in principle on the programme of the Estonian EU Council Presidency which will be based on four priorities. The final version of the Estonian Presidency programme is to be approved at the government meeting scheduled for 29 June.

The government has already approved the four priorities of the Estonian Presidency. They are:

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The EU turns 60: anniversary of the Treaty of Rome

On 25 March 2017, Heads of State or Government and the Presidents of the EU Institutions came together in Rome to mark the **60th anniversary of the signature of the Treaties of Rome**, which laid the foundations for the European Union we know today.

The Rome Summit was hosted by the Italian authorities, and on this occasion EU leaders adopted a **Declaration**.



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DG SANTE - Midterm Review of Digital Single Market Strategy includes areas for enhanced action in digital health and care

On 10 May 2017, the Commission published the mid-term review of the Digital Single Market (DSM) Strategy. Adopted in 2015, the DSM aims to make the EU's single market freedoms "go digital" and boost growth and jobs in the EU. The review assesses progress towards the implementation of the DSM, identifying where more efforts are needed and where the changing digital landscape calls for new action at the EU level.



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DG SANTE - Mid-term evaluation of the 3rd Health Programme 2014-2020

Between 23 November 2016 to 23 February 2017, an Open Public Consultation of the mid-term evaluation of the 3rd Health Programme 2014-2020 took place.

The objective of the consultation was to ensure that, in addition to the organisations and individuals directly involved in or benefitting from the activities of the Programme, wider stakeholder groups as well as the general public have a say in its performance and future priorities.



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WEF - Global Pension Time bomb: Funding Gap Set to Dwarf World GDP

The world's six largest pension systems will have a joint shortfall of \$224 trillion by 2050, imperilling the incomes of future generations setting the industrialized world up for the biggest pension crisis in history. To alleviate the looming crisis, governments must address the gaps in access to the pensions system and ageing populations as they are the key sources of the widening pension gap. These are the main findings of the new World Economic Forum report, *We'll Live to 100 – How Can We Afford It?*



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ILO - Tripartite meeting highlights the importance of improving health sector employment and working conditions

Decent work is crucial to ensuring effective and resilient health systems, addressing global health workforce shortages and achieving equal access to quality health care. A [Tripartite Meeting on Improving Employment and Working Conditions in Health Services](#) organized by the ILO in Geneva from 24 to 28 April brought together representatives of governments, employers and workers from around the world to discuss challenges and opportunities in the rapidly changing health sector.



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WHO-Europe - Highlighting nurses and midwives' commitment to delivering the highest quality care

The WHO European Region has 7.3 million nurses and midwives, who play a vital role in promoting health, preventing illness and providing care to expectant mothers and new-borns, and to people in good and ill health across diverse settings. On the occasions of International Day of the Midwife on 5 May and International Nurses Day on 12 May, the WHO Regional Office for Europe is highlighting these critically important professions by featuring the voices of nurses and midwives from around the Region.



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WHO- Seventieth World Health Assembly, 22–31 May 2017

From 22 to 31 May 2017, the seventieth World Health Assembly took place in Geneva, Switzerland. The World Health Assembly is the decision-making body of WHO. It is attended by all WHO Member States and focuses on a health agenda prepared by the

Executive Board. The main functions of the World Health Assembly are to determine the policies of WHO, appoint the Director-General, supervise financial policies, and review and approve the proposed programme budget.



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DG CONNECT – E-health week



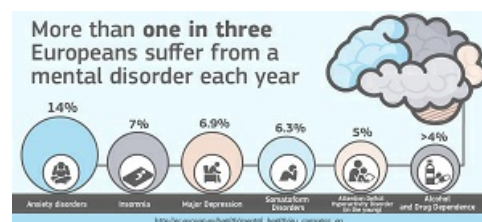
From 10 to 12 May 2017, eHealth Week 2017 took place in Malta. The event – organised by the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU, European Commission, WHO/Europe and Himss Europe – gathered over a thousand stakeholders from across the globe to address international hot topics related to eHealth, wellbeing and ageing.

The overarching theme of eHealth Week 2017 is Data for Health: the key to personalised sustainable care.

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DG SANTE - Second EU Mental Health Compass Forum

The second Annual EU Compass Forum on Mental Health and Well-being took place in Luxembourg on 8-9 June 2017. The event was aimed to diverse stakeholders such as policy makers and Member State representatives, non-governmental stakeholders from advocacy groups and care organisations, as well as mental health care providers, professionals, and service users.



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Research in Action

Output-based hospital-specific Purchasing Power Parities

Numerous studies have shown substantial variation in hospital expenditure across OECD countries. However, there is only limited understanding of the potential sources of this variation. Explaining hospital (or more broadly health care) expenditure in terms of volumes and prices requires expenditure data to be converted using a common currency. Purchasing Power Parities (PPPs) are commonly used to convert national currencies to a common unit. One of the main advantages of using PPPs is that they are both currency converters and price deflators.



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DG CNECT - Robots helping seniors & seniors helping robots: Thinking out of the box!

This is a guest blog post written by Jorge Diaz

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This is a guest blog post written by Jorge Blas, GrowMeUp project coordinator, on behalf of all project team. *The Horizon 2020 GrowMeUp project has just entered its third and final year, and what a journey it has been! We started with a goal which still holds true today: to provide a robotic platform that can help the ageing population in their daily lives. But guess what?*

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DG CNECT - Project "Interaction": A sensor-fitted suit to analyse stroke patients' movements

The moment when stroke patients return home after treatment has always been a source of concern for both themselves and their physicians, as the latter are left blind without any feedback. But this is now a thing of the past: a novel suit fitted with 41 sensors is finally ready for commercialisation.

Could resorting to rehabilitation clinics be less of a necessity in the near future?



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Multi-collaborative growth model for the health and care sector: A reflection on the state of the art



What are the benefits of multi-stakeholder and policy collaboration for the health and care sector? Policy Officer Jaakko Aarnio analyses this and more in a pre-publication of the DG Connect Open Innovation Yearbook 2017.

In the article, Jaakko Aarnio presents the benefits of a multi-stakeholder and policy collaboration to the health sector. He also discusses the advantages of thematic Communities of Practice (CoPs) to foster growth in the context of healthcare challenges across the innovation chain.

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Events and Calls for proposals

European Forum Alpbach 2017

The European Forum Alpbach is an annual convention that hosts a series of symposia ranging from politics, economics, education, technology, and health. Apart from bringing together participants from over 60 nations, experts, researchers, professionals, and students in lectures, panels, and break-out session it is also pleasantly located in the beautiful mountain scenery of the Tyrol.



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Set up of an expert group on UN Agenda 2030 and the SDGs

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) has set 17 Sustainable Development



Goals (SDGs), which, differently from the past, apply not only to developing countries but to all UN members. The EU together with its Member States is fully committed to be a frontrunner in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the related SDGs.

In line with the 2016 Communication Next steps for a sustainable European future, a multi-stakeholder platform on the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the EU will be established.

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Silver Economy Awards open for submission - Webinar 21 June 2017

The Silver Economy Awards celebrate those improving the lives of senior Europeans, and we are excited to announce that its first edition is now open for submissions. We welcome applications from all those with game-changing ICT-related product and service innovations supporting age groups over 50 in the broad spectrum of areas that make up the European Silver Economy.



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News from the network

The 2nd International Young Carers Conference, 29-31 May 2017, Malmö, Sweden

The 2nd International Young Carers Conference "Every Child has the Right to..." was held from 29 to 31 May 2017 in Malmö, Sweden. Co-hosted by Nka (Swedish Family Care Competence Centre) Linnaeus University, BarnsBeste (National Competence Network Norway), FORTE (Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare), the National Board of Health and Welfare in Sweden, the National Board of Social Services in Denmark in co-operation with Eurocarers, Region Skåne, Malmö City and Region Jönköping County.



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Eurocarers participated in the Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth 2017



The Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth took place on 24 April 2017. It brought 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 Convention was opened by Marianne Thyssen, the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility and was closed by Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue. Click [here](#) to read Commissioner Thyssen's speech.

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Meeting of the European Parliament Interest Group on Carers on "The new

European Pillar of Social Rights" - Brussels, 11 April 2017

Last March, the European Commission put forward a first outline of what should become the European Pillar of Social Rights. This will identify a number of essential principles common to Euro-area Member States, focusing on their needs and challenges in the field of employment and social policies.

Once in place, the Pillar should become the reference framework to screen the employment and social performance of participating Member States, to drive reforms at national level and, more specifically, to serve as a compass for the renewed process of convergence within the Euro area.



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The Eurocarers Policy Working Group held its second face-to-face meeting, in Brussels, on 11 April 2017



On 11 April 2017, the Eurocarers Policy Working Group held its second face-to-face meeting, in Brussels. Launched on 15 June 2016, the Eurocarers Policy Working Group currently consists of 23 Carers' organisations from 15 European Countries. It aims to be a platform to align priorities and exchange ideas, expertise and best practices on strategies to advance the cause of carers.

The two main objectives of the EPWG are:

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Eurocarers Regional Seminar (Mediterranean countries), 9-10 May 2017, Porto

On 9-10 May 2017, Eurocarers held a Regional Seminar for Mediterranean countries, in Vila Nova de Gaia, Porto. The event – kindly hosted by Cuidadores Portugal- gathered 9 members from 6 European countries.

On day 1, participants provided an overview of the situation of carers in their countries, as well as an overview of their organisation's work.

On day 2, representatives from more 'carer-friendly' contexts presented the steps and initiatives taken in their countries/regions to contribute to the recognition of carers.



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News from Greece - Theatre performance "Caregiver's voice"



Three professional actors and a caregiver have presented in a theatrical performance, the stories of the caregivers, which have been produced during the therapeutic intervention "Listen to my story" in the Department for Caregivers of Alzheimer Hellas in Thessaloniki. Based on the therapeutic benefits of art, the intervention "Listen to my story" has been designed in order to help families of people with dementia to express their feelings, to find new meanings of their experiences and to better acclimate to dementia.

News from Italy - Preventing burnout among nurses and care workers

Caregiver burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that may be accompanied by a change in attitude - from positive and caring to negative and unconcerned. The demands on a caregiver's body, mind, and emotions can easily seem overwhelming, leading to fatigue and hopelessness - and, ultimately, burnout. Burnout can affect informal carers, but it is also widespread among professional carers, such as for example nurses and care professionals.

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Opinions

Carers' voice: two testimonies from Italy

Earlier, my father with Alzheimer disease for about 15 year, and they talked of "arteriosclerosis". I learned more and I desired to know more through the Alzheimer Italia Federation within which I was part, with a local association. I followed many families and I took care of them, especially listening tears and despair. I organized "Alzheimer cafe" and urged the institutions several times encountering great obstacles and heedlessness. My dad lived with my mother who had become her caregiver, even if she was also fragile.

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