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**Dear readers,**

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter in 2017. Last year ended on a bit of a cliffhanger, with a very promising proposal tabled by the European Commission on a “New start to address the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families” and a new initiative on an EU Pillar of Social Rights. These developments, if approved by the Council, have the potential to create an even bigger momentum for our message: informal care is an asset for Europe and should be supported but informal care should remain a choice and carers should therefore be able to rely on good-quality professional care alternatives.

The work-life balance proposal includes very strong arguments in favour of carers and goes as far as to suggest the creation of an EU carer leave while the Pillar of Social rights clearly acknowledges the burden of care and the obstacles that informal care responsibilities generate on the road to employment. At the time of this editorial though and as a result of a two-stage consultation with social partners, it seems that some of the flagship features put forward by the EC (such as the EU carer leave) might finally be watered down in the final proposals to be published in the coming weeks. Nevertheless, we remain convinced that both the work-life balance initiative and the Pillar of Social Rights offer a great backdrop for our work in 2017 and beyond.

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion – our main partner in the European Commission - has already announced that unemployment and youth will be the two main priorities for the coming period and we will therefore continue to emphasise the challenges faced by working carers and young (adult) carers. As always, we look forward to collaborating with you on these topics and more.

To conclude, I would like to draw your attention to the article that briefly presents our planned capacity-building and advocacy activities for this year (see News from the Network section). These activities aim to meet your needs and support your daily work so, as always, your participation will be most welcome. We would therefore be very grateful if you could pencil your diary and let us know whether you want to attend - or even host – one of these events.

Thanks in advance,

Stecy Yghemonos

Executive Director



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## EU Policy Developments

High-level conference on the European Pillar of Social Rights last 23 January: still waiting for detailed proposals

Eurocarers participated in the high-profile Conference on the European Pillar of Social Rights on the 23 January in Brussels. More than 600 participants from Member State authorities, EU institutions, social partners and civil society, including



more than 20 national Ministers, President Juncker and several Members of the College of Commissioners, as well as the new President of the European Parliament, Antonio Tajani, discussed the results of the public consultation on this European Pillar of Social Rights.

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## Joint Declaration on the EU's legislative priorities for 2017

We are at a critical juncture for the European Union. This is a time of many global, economic, environmental and societal challenges. European citizens therefore expect the European Union to make a concrete difference in helping address the biggest of these challenges.



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## Health in the Annual Growth Survey 2017



On December 8, the Council met in its Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs formation (EPSCO). The debate revolved around three questions posed by the Presidency, namely: whether the European Semester and the Annual Growth Survey should be the subject of debate in the Health part of future meetings of the Council (EPSCO) in order for it to be better involved in the European Semester process; whether the Working Party on Public Health at Senior Level should be instructed to review in what way an increased involvement of the Council (EPSCO) could contribute to improve the European Semester process; and how the Annual Growth Survey could best be used to ensure that health systems are fit for the future.

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## EU's legislative priorities for 2017

On 13 December 2016, the Council approved the EU's legislative priorities for 2017 as agreed beforehand with the European Parliament and the

Commission. This will help the three EU institutions to pool their efforts and to ensure substantial progress in fields where they are most needed. A joint declaration setting out the EU priorities will be signed by the Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, the President of the Parliament, Martin Schulz, and the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker later the same day.



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## Fifth Commission report on projects financed by EaSI and its predecessors



The European Commission published its fifth monitoring report in which it reviewed activities implemented by 19 EU-level organisations in 2015 funded under the EU's Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) and 30 projects supported by its predecessor programmes PROGRESS and EURES (2013-2016).

This time the focus was not only on potential good practices, but also on the European added value.

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## DG SANTE - ADVANTAGE: New Joint Action on Frailty launched

**Prof Leocadio Rodríguez Mañas, ADVANTAGE Joint Action Coordinator, Head of Geriatrics, University Hospital of Getafe** shares his views on the new EU-supported Joint Action and how it will address issues of healthy ageing and frailty.



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## Blueprint to innovate health and care in Europe



How can we best innovate health and care provision in our ageing society? Called upon by Commissioner Günther Oettinger, policy makers, civil society, professional organisations and industry have developed a European blueprint to address this challenge. Next to a shared vision on this topic, it also includes a roadmap listing actions until 2018.



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## WHO-Europe - New implementation package to support countries' efforts to transform health services delivery

In the WHO European Region, millions of people do not have access to the right health care services at the right time and in the right place. Health systems looking to meet this challenge are strained by the growing burden of non-communicable diseases, the re-emergence of several communicable diseases and the fact that people are living longer and with chronic conditions. In this environment, there is a clear need for health services delivery that is proactive rather than reactive; comprehensive and continuous rather than episodic and disease-specific; and founded on lasting patient-provider relationships rather than incidental, provider-led care.

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## Meeting of OECD Health Ministers



A Meeting of the Health Committee at Ministerial Level on The Next Generation of Health Reforms was held on 17th January 2017 at the OECD Conference Centre in Paris, France.

Important developments in health systems, such as new technologies, the emergence of personalised medicine and big data, as well as innovations in workforce arrangements – are challenging the governance of health systems in unprecedented ways.

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## Research in Action

### ICT4LIFE PROJECT

Claire Champeix represented Eurocarers in an event organised by the European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE) on "ICT4Life approach and contribution to the challenge of integrated care" on 19 January.

The ICT4Life project is a three-year project financed by Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.



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## VulnerABLE project on health inequalities



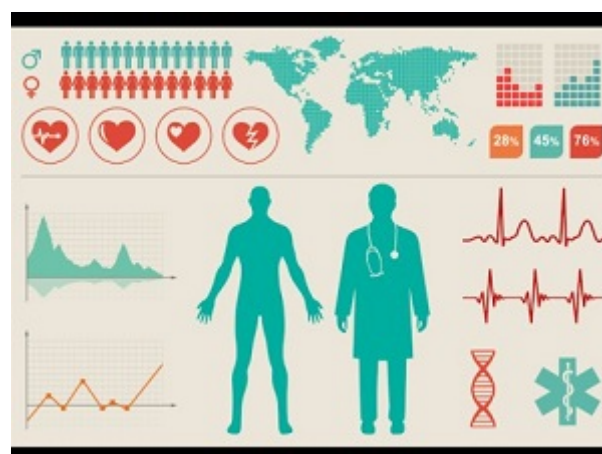
Claire Champeix represented Eurocarers in a focus group organised by the European Public Health Alliance in the framework of the project VulnerABLE last 12 January. **The VulnerABLE project began in early 2016 and aims to examine barriers and opportunities in accessing healthcare services for people living in vulnerable and isolated situations.** This two-year project of DG Health and Food Safety of the European Commission is carried out by ICF International, in collaboration with EuroHealthNet, the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), the Social Platform, the UCL Institute of Health Equity and GfK.

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## DG SANTE - Big Data Study outlines policy recommendations in 10 areas

A Study on Big Data in Public Health, Telemedicine and Healthcare, financed by the Commission's Health Programme, has been published today.

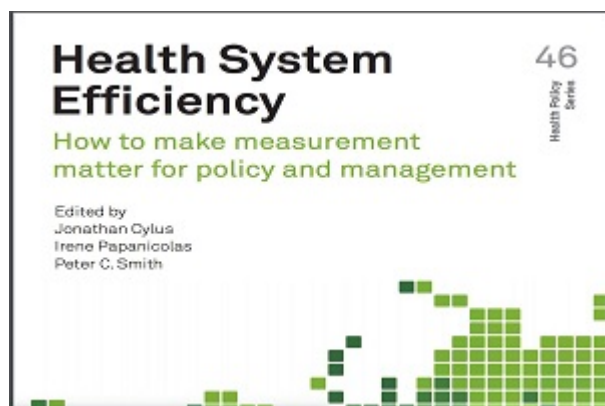
It identifies examples of the use of Big Data in Health, and puts forward recommendations covering 10 relevant fields: awareness raising, education and training, data sources, open data and data sharing, applications and purposes, data analysis, governance of data access and use, standards, funding and financial resources, and legal and privacy aspects



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## European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies - Efficiency

## measurement in health systems



The pursuit of efficiency is one of the central preoccupations of health policy-makers and managers, and justifiably so. Most immediately, inefficient care can lead to unnecessarily poor outcomes for patients, measured either in terms of their health improvement, or in their broader satisfaction with the health system.

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## Events and Calls for proposals

### IARS International Conference: “Youth-led solutions to unemployment: The voices of young, marginalised carers”, 27 April – London, UK

The IARS International Institute is pleased to announce its 5th Annual International Conference titled “Youth-led solutions to unemployment: The voices of young, marginalised carers” that will be held on the 27th April 2017 (9:00 – 16:00) at the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple, Middle Temple Lane, London EC4Y 9AT, UK.



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### Joint Transnational Call for Proposals under the Joint Programming Initiative "More Years Better Lives" 2017

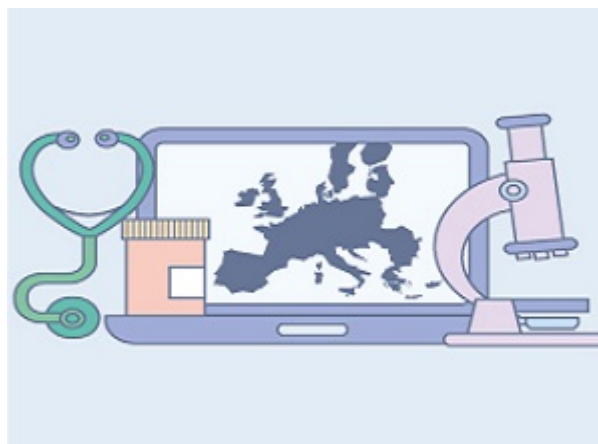


The Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) “More Years, Better Lives – The Potential and Challenges of Demographic Change” seeks to enhance coordination and collaboration between European and national research programmes related to demographic change. Areas affected by demographic change cover a wide range of research fields and policy topics ranging from health to social welfare, education & learning, work & productivity to housing, urban & rural development and mobility.

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### Third Programme of the Union’s action in the field of health (2014-2020)

Please click [here](#) to access the Call for applications 2016 — Third Programme of the Union's action in the field of health (2014-2020).



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## News from the network

### Eurocarers Programme of activities 2017 – mark your diary!



Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to inform you that our planned programme of activities for this year will include:

- » A two-day 'study visit' on the potential offered by European Structural and Investment Funds - 23-24 March (TBC), Brussels
- » A first meeting of the EP Interest Group on carers on the topic of the "EU pillar of social rights" – 11 April, Brussels
- » Eurocarers' second Regional Seminar (on the Mediterranean region) – 9-10 May, (Location TBC)
- » Eurocarers' AGM 2017 – 20<sup>th</sup> June, Brussels
- » Final conference of the Training and Recognition of Carers' Skills (TRACK) project – 21<sup>th</sup> June, Brussels

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### The Netherlands – 'In voor Matelzorg' project - Positive teamwork between formal and informal carers increases the commitment and the job satisfaction of formal caregivers

More committed caregivers, improved care and support for patients and their informal carers, and more job satisfaction for formal caregivers. Those are the biggest advantages of developing team work between professional carers and informal carers. Movisie (Expertise centre for social development) and Vilans (Expertise centre for long-term care),



partners in the project 'In voor Mantelzorg', draw this conclusion building on research.



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## The Netherlands - Who makes the difference? Social inequality in the conditions for and consequences of informal help, inaugural lecture from Alice de Boer.



On 26 January 2017, Alice de Boer, a researcher at the Netherlands Institute for Social Research/ SCP in The Hague, delivered her inaugural lecture as professor of an endowed chair in Social Inequality and Informal Help in the Faculty of Social Sciences at VU University Amsterdam.

Lots of people in the Netherlands are currently providing informal help: there are more than four million informal carers and almost a million volunteers providing care and support. A good deal of concern has been expressed in the public debate about this unpaid help and about the specific groups who provide it.

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## UK- Black and Minority Ethnic Young carers: One of the most neglected groups

Research conducted by the IARS International Institute indicates that BME young carers constitute one of the most, if not the most, marginalised and neglected groups by policy makers, the current administration and independent funders and educators. IARS's work forms part of the EU funded Care to Work project and the findings are now backed up by the December Children's Commissioner study on the current services provided to young carers by local authorities.



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## Poland – a new Incubator for Social Innovation addresses the needs of carers



In the Malopolska Region, the number people who are dependent because of age and disability increases. Already, one out of five Malopolska citizens is the caregiver of an elderly person, and in a few years it is estimated that 100 people of working age will support 58 dependents. In addition, care services and assistants are required for people with serious disabilities, who currently represent 12% of the Malopolska population. This diagnosis highlights the scale of the needs, and thus the scale of the challenges that lie ahead.

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## Eurocarers - Eurocarers welcomes the call for investment in care services in the Annual Growth Survey 2017

Eurocarers, the European Association working for and with informal carers, warmly welcomes the European Commission's call for further investment by member states in fully-fleshed and accessible health and long-term care services as well as its suggestion to credit care duties in pension systems, as part of the Annual Growth Survey (AGS) 2017.



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## Eurocarers Press Release - Recognition and valorisation of informal carers – Italian members of the Eurocarers network meet their MEPs



An informal carer is 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.

Approximately 80% of care across the EU is currently provided by relatives and friends. Informal carers therefore play a vital role in our welfare systems. This will become all the more true given the increase of long-term care (LTC) needs resulting from demographic ageing.

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## Eurocarers takes part in European Day of Persons with Disabilities

As every year, the European Commission was celebrating the Day of Persons with Disabilities together with the European Disability Forum. This year's Day of Persons with Disabilities conference took place on 29-30 November 2016 in Brussels. The conference specifically celebrated the 10th anniversary of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.



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## Eurocarers contributes to consultation meeting of UN High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment Stakeholder Engagement Meeting



On the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016, Eurocarers was invited to contribute to a Stakeholder Engagement Meeting organised by the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, in collaboration with the European Commission and the UN Women Brussels Office. Empowering women in the economy is central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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## Second European Summit on Digital Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing

On the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016, Eurocarers took part in the second European Summit on Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing, in Brussels. The Summit was organised by the European Commission in cooperation with the European Parliament and the European Committee of the Regions. Eurocarers acted as one of the European Commission's strategic partner on this event.



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## Joint Statement on Mental Health

Eurocarers, together with 16 European organisations, signed a joint statement calling for more action on mental health in Europe

Mental health is everyone's concern. It is central to all our lives and impacts our well-being, our work, our societies, our families and our economies. 17 European organisations expressed their concerns



regarding the mental health of millions of Europeans and made several proposals about how the services and support they receive can be improved and supported by the European Union.

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## Opinions

### Czech Republic – Carer's voice - the story of Lukáš Hirka, a war veteran, and his family

The case of Lukáš Hirka illustrates the vital importance of informal care for the recovery of their beloved one, especially when facing extremely serious health conditions.

Lukáš, who was a soldier, was twenty-nine years old when he was severely injured during a mission in Afghanistan. His brain was touched and he entered a coma that lasted two months.



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