



# The European Care Strategy

A life-course perspective to care

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# Introduction

# Rationale for an EU Care Strategy

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- ✓ Care is an integral part of social Europe, it concerns us all (as care recipients or carers) and it accompanies us throughout life
- ✓ Reinforcing care systems is a social investment:  
Strong care systems foster gender equality, enhance social fairness and intergenerational solidarity
- ✓ It helps turn various principles of the EU Social Pillar into reality
- ✓ Current EU efforts have exhausted their potential to address a substantial and growing concern → more targeted EU action is needed to stimulate policy reform

# Aims of the Strategy

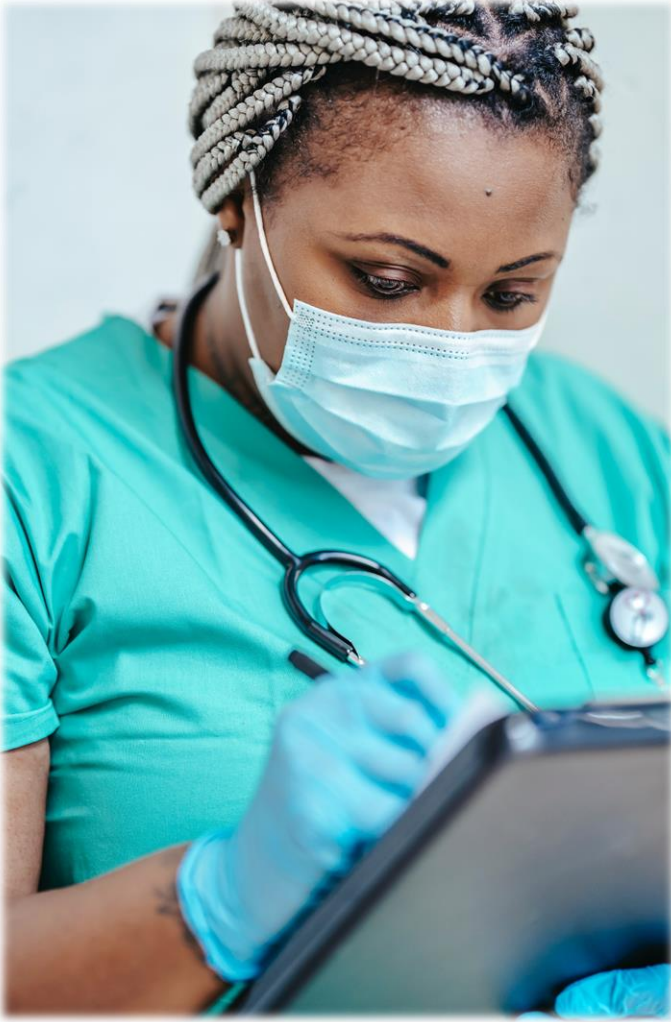
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- ✓ **Sets an agenda** to improve the situation for both carers and care receivers. It calls on MS to boost access to quality, affordable and accessible care services while improving working conditions and work-life balance for carers.
- ✓ **Together with the strategy, the EC puts forward a proposal for a Council recommendation on LTC, which invites MS to take action. it:**
  - Encourages MS to strengthen social protection for LTC and improve the adequacy, availability, and accessibility of services;
  - Puts forward a set of quality principles and quality assurance guidance, building on the work of the SPC;
  - Calls for action to improve working conditions and upskilling/reskilling opportunities in the care sector, while highlighting the role of informal carers and their need for support;
  - Sets out principles of sound policy governance and sustainable financing.

# Aspects captured by the Strategy

# 1. Care Services

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- **Access to care:** territorial disparity, waiting lines, heavy procedures, insufficient info, etc.
- **Affordability:** social protection to ensure everyone can afford care
- **Growing/changing needs** due to demographic ageing
- **Quality:** care quality standards and assurance practices need to be reinforced, based on person-centred approaches and integrated provision.

# 2. Carers

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- **Better working conditions and salaries**
- **Better education and training**
- **Large job creation potential**
- **Informal care should be a choice, not a necessity and carers should be supported**, incl. via work-life balance measures (care leaves and flexible working conditions), care allowances and pension credits



# 3. Economic dimension / investment

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- **Great economic potential:** silver and care economy, job creation and stronger communities
- Important role of **social economy actors** and **civil society organisations**
- Investing in care helps ensure the fair dimension of **digital and green transitions**
- Efforts to step up **public investment** and **ensure financial sustainability** need to be pursued
- Importance of **public health** and **healthy ageing**



# Action Points

# "Enforcement" of the Strategy (1/2)

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## Proposal for a Council Recommendation on access to affordable and high-quality LTC in order to:

- Put in place a framework for policy reforms to improve social protection and reinforce the provision of quality services;
- Set out recommendations on improving working conditions in the LTC sector, making it more attractive and creating pathways to employment in the sector by tapping into the potential of specific groups;
- Set out recommendations for MS to identify and support informal carers by:
  - (a) facilitating their cooperation with LTC workers;
  - (b) helping carers to access training, counselling, healthcare, psychological support and respite care;
  - (c) providing them with adequate financial support

# "Enforcement" of the Strategy (2/2)

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## Put EU funds at disposal to support high-quality care provision, via:

- Structural funds to boost community and family-based services, including home-care and community-based care;
- Research and innovation for person-centred care and uptake of digital solutions through calls for proposals in the Horizon and Digital Europe programmes;
- Support to sectoral cooperation on LTC skills (through Erasmus+);
- Calls for proposals to advance gender equality and empowerment of women, incl. via the promotion of family-friendly practices in companies encouraging an equal sharing of informal care between women and men and via the valorisation of care work (Citizenship Equality Rights Values programme).

Half Empty?



Half Full?



Thank you

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