

'A fair deal for carers'

Developing a set of principles for employing informal carers

Outcomes of Eurocarers' Policy Working Group workshops

Eurocarers Annual General Meeting
Brussels, May 2024



Aims of EPWG in the last 12 months

Regarding emerging discussion and practices aimed at ‘formalising informal care’ through employment contracts, ensuring that Eurocarers’ members are:

- better equipped for **advocating** regional and national measures to improve carers’ employment and support;
- better informed and acknowledged as **solution-focused partners** in care provision and LTC reforms design.

Mailing list: cc@eurocarers.org

Webpage : <https://eurocarers.org/epwg/>

EPWG's reflection on the subject since the 2023 AGM.

WHAT EUROCARERS CAN DO:

A long-term vision for long-term care based on carers' demands that is ambitious (e.g. directives, individual → state responsibility)

Keep up the pressure on governments and at the same time by empowering carers' organisations

Advocate for training for professional carers on how to support informal carers

Facilitate sharing of knowledge & experience:

- Methodologie to implement CS principles concretely in nat. context
- "what didn't work": reality checks/pitfalls...
- Innovative, creative practices for community-based care
- Employment of carers.

'Charter' of principles on:

- employment of inf. carers
- collaboration btw inf carers and prof.



EPWG 'Internal' Workshop
November 2023



EPWG 'Open' Workshop –
January 2024

Potentially employed family carers



Spouses /
couples /
siblings



Parents/grandparent/
carer of ill/disabled
child



Adult children of elders



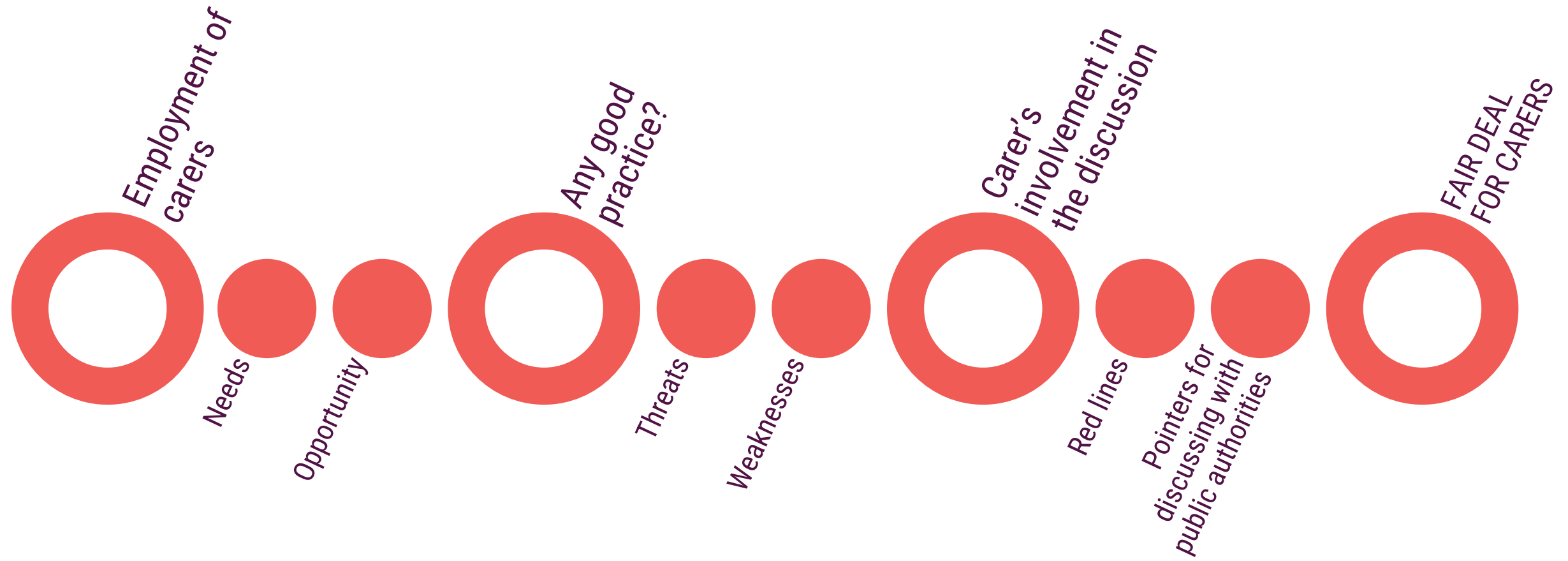
Seniors (print screen from Swiss television
broadcasting, December 19, 2023)

"World Café" at 2023 AGM
Eurocarers' ambitions 2023-2030/ carer policy

**'Employment
of carers'**



**Fair Deal
for carers**



The starting point

Access to adequate support services and measures for informal carers such as counselling, psychological support or respite care is often scarce and uneven. Many informal carers do not receive proper training in caring for a dependent, sometimes resulting in feelings of over-burdening or even mental health issues (e.g. burnout). Especially for older informal carers, caring responsibilities can be challenging and affect their own healthy living. There is scope to foster good practice in supporting informal carers, for instance by tapping into the expertise of the World Health Organization. Policies to formalise informal care, for example by service contracts with public authorities, can benefit informal carers and their dependents and help recognise and value better care giving.

The Commission will:

- monitor the take-up of the new rights covered by the Work-Life Balance Directive, including through the monitoring framework drawn up by the Employment and Social Protection Committees on the uptake of family leave and flexible working time arrangements by women and men with care responsibilities;

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION on the European care strategy

Kärntner Modell of employment of carers in Austria



Current contracting practices involving informal carers: benefits and shortfalls *

Benefits

- ✓ Identification
- ✓ Financial support
- ✓ Formalisation of care arrangements (Sharing of the care responsibilities within the family, DK)
- ✓ Response to the lack of LTC services in some remote areas (islands) or within groups with specific linguistic and cultural needs (Scotland)

* Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands, Belgium, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Norway, Ireland, Italy, Austria, Switzerland,

Current contracting practices involving informal carers: benefits and shortfalls*

Shortfalls:

- ✓ Amounts remain insufficient (NL, FI)
- ✓ The person receiving assistance has their benefits withdrawn when the caregiver becomes employed (AU)
- ✓ Employment without employment rights: insurance, working time limit.... (DK, FI, NW)
- ✓ Intersectionality: can contribute to keeping vulnerable women outside of the labour market (DK)
- ✓ Lack of pathways to re-enter the labour market (DK, NW)
- ✓ Lack of support (NL, SL)
- ✓ Despite the right to respite, lack of concrete access (FI)
- ✓ No recognition of carers as partners in care or clients (FI)

* DK, FI, NL, BE, SK, BG, NW, IR, IT, CZ, AU, CH

Challenges identified

- Strains on the care-carer relationship / financial security of the carers
- Losing priority on investing in formal services and retaining care professionals (BE, IT, BG)
- Security and quality / over-regulation of care tasks (CH)
- Complexity / schemes adapted to various situations (NL)
- Care should be recognised as 'work' but not dealt with as ordinary work
- Flexibility / blurring the lines (NL)



Key principles

- Care is primarily the **responsibility of the State**, built on solidarity. The responsibility for care should not be shifted to families.
- The priority is to invest in the **development of formal services**, and contracting informal carers should only be an **additional** choice offered to carers.
- Our societies need to become more carer-friendly, involving employers responsibility.
- **Choice** should be at the core of the design of long-term care policies.
- The choice of a care arrangement should correspond to the **best possible outcomes for the person requiring care and the carer**. It must in no case be the subject of pressure or obligation towards the carer.

Guidelines for designing a fair deal for carers : prerequisites

- Acknowledge the **real costs** of caring
- **Investment** in LTC systems is needed: no cheap fix!
- **Integrated care** is key to supporting and recognising informal carers
- Choose the right **terminology** ('Care agreement', 'Memorandum of Understanding' rather than 'Employment')
- Carers willing to continue providing care informally should be equally supported

Guidelines for designing a fair deal for carers: key asks



- Financial gain and living wage
- Safeguarding the relationship
- Co-creation and flexibility
- Simplicity, transparency, accessibility
- Rights: insurance and limited liability, respite, pension, training, safe work environment, sick leave, limited working time...
- Comprehensive support countering isolation
- Individual 'exit' strategy

Immediacy of the issue in the context of LTC reforms



- Practically all Member States experience a shortfall of professional workers in this sector.
- More than 1 in 6 of the 24.3 million online job advertisements, in 2021 concerned LTC occupations.



Questions

Please answer on the paper circulated or by email (cc@eurocarers.org)

- Are you aware of / involved in other practices of contracting informal carers for the care they provide ?
- Is your organisation aware/ involved in discussions related to 'employing carers' at national/regional/ local level?

To what extent the challenges identified, the suggested principles and guidelines are relevant to the specific context in your country/region?

Thank you for your attention!

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