

Eurocarers Annual General Assembly 21-22 May 2024

Palais des Académies / Room Ilya Prigogine
Rue Ducale 1 - 1000 Brussels

Draft minutes

Quorum: Article 13 of the association's statutes states that:

The deliberations are valid only if a quorum of at least 33% of the votes is present or represented. (39 out of our 40 full members have paid their fees in due time to be able to vote so, a minimum of 13 votes is required to comply with our rules). A total of 38 delegates from 31 organisations in 21 countries, out of which 25 Full members (Tiers 1 and 2, present or represented) attended the AGM 2024.

[...]

The decisions are adopted by simple majority of the votes that are present or represented, except in the case of dissolution or an amendment of the present Articles of Association, which require a qualified two-thirds majority.

If a resolution is adopted regarding the election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons, Treasurer, Secretary or any other member of the Board, it is the person obtaining the highest number of votes that is elected.

The quorum was achieved (Please see Annex 1 for the list of participants)

Apologies

Members holding their voting rights at the date of the General Assembly

NTNU - Centre for Care Research (NO); Zentrum für Qualität in der Pflege (DE); Vilans (NL); General Directorate of Social Work and Child Protection (RO); University of Birmingham (UK); Federation Nationale des Aidants et Accueillants Familiales (FR); Greek Carers Network EPIONI (EL); Anziani e Non Solo (IT); ANCI - Associação Nacional de Cuidadores Informais (PT); University of Ljubljana (SI); Careum Stiftung (CH); Carers Trust (UK); Association Française des aidants (FR); Jeunes aidants ensemble – JADE (FR); Care Alliance Ireland (IE); Swedish Family Care Competence Centre (SE)

Other members:

Alzheimer Bulgaria Association (BG); Austrian Carers Organisation (AT); Aidants Proches Bruxelles (BE); Aidants proches Wallonie (BE); Samana (BE); Alfa Human Service (CZ); Daneage (DK); La Compagnie des Aidants (FR); Proches Aidants France (FR); AlliPa - Allianz pflegende Angehörige e.V. (DE); Associazione C'ENTRO (IT); Associazione de Banfield (IT); CARER ETS (IT); Mantelzorg (NL); The Netherlands Institute for Social Research - SCP (NL); Longevidade Digital (PT); Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organisations – ZDUS (SI); Pro Aidants (CH); Jeunes Aidants proches Bruxelles (BE); Myra Lewinter (DK); Marja Pijl (NL); Dr. Jolanta Perek Bialas (PL); Simona Hvalic Touzery (SI); Martha Mackay (ES); Geraldine Boyle - Open University (UK); Jitka Vseteckova - Open University (UK); University of Sussex (UK)
Welcome address by Sari Tervonen, Eurocarers President.



Verification of participants

The AGM was held in a face-to-face format and their identities were verified through a two-step process:

- Personal invitations to the AGM 2024 followed by a pre-registration process – all communications related to the meeting were sent exclusively to the email addresses provided by member organisations; and
- Access details for the AGM were sent only to those who had completed the registration form.

Adoption of agenda¹

Members were invited to submit their proposed motions or comments regarding the agenda to the secretariat by the 30th April 2024. On the 29th April, wir Pflegen e.V., VOCAL and the Coalition of Carers in Scotland jointly submitted a motion titled "Strengthening Carer Advocacy in the Nations and Regions." This motion was approved by the Board and included in the updated AGM agenda, which was circulated to Eurocarers members at least three weeks in advance, in accordance with Article 10.1 of our internal rules. **The General Assembly unanimously adopted the agenda as circulated.**

Minutes and matters arising

There were no matters arising from the AGM held in Berlin, Germany on the 25-26 May 2023. Consequently, **the minutes of last year's AGM were unanimously approved by the participants as circulated.**

Reports

Treasurer's Report 2023

Anita Vatland, Eurocarers Treasurer, shared the key learnings from her report, made available to all Eurocarers members on the 1st May 2024 via the dedicated webpage: <https://eurocarers.org/election-of-eurocarers-board-members-2024>. In her presentation, Anita confirmed that our organisation's financial situation is positive and sustainable and should remain so in the foreseeable future. Our network's annual turnover amounted to €520,477 in 2023, derived from four main funding sources: the core grant accompanying our partnership agreement with the EC under the EaSI programme (67%), our research projects (17%), membership fees (9%) and corporate sponsors (6%). Throughout the year, we maintained a healthier cash flow and achieved a surplus for the second consecutive year. These positive financial results have provided Eurocarers with a solid economic foundation as we celebrate our 20th anniversary.

The enduring involvement of our founders in the Board and network is truly inspiring. Their dedication demonstrates how collective effort can drive meaningful change over time and underscores the importance of cultivating a growing network that attracts contributing members. Moving forward, it will be crucial to maintain our relevance and nurture solidarity among our members and partners.

Following a brief exchange with participants, the General Assembly unanimously approved the Treasurer's report and the Eurocarers 2023 accounts. Additionally, the General Assembly

¹ The final agenda shall be decided upon by the General Assembly as soon as it opens on a majority of 2/3 of the members present or represented. For other decisions "decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of the votes present or represented, except in the case of dissolution or amendments to the Statutes which requires the qualified majority of 2/3" (Article 13 of Statutes)



unanimously discharged the Board of Directors for fulfilling their mandate up to 31st December 2023 (25 favourable votes of full members organisations present or represented / Quorum: 13 votes).

[Annual activity report 2023](#)

Stecy Yghemonos, Eurocarers Director, presented the key achievements of our network in 2023. These accomplishments will be detailed in the Eurocarers Annual Activity Report 2023, which will be published on the Eurocarers website (<https://eurocarers.org/product-category/ar/>) by the end of May 2024.

As always, our work programme was structured around four overarching priorities (and work packages) as defined in our partnership agreement with the European Commission (DG EMPL) under the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme. These priorities/work packages are:

1. Actions and recommendations to inform EU policy-making
2. Bridge-building between EU-level and national actors
3. Awareness-raising and dissemination
4. Network organization and management

In line with these priorities, the activities carried out in 2023 to achieve these four objectives included:

Priority 1 - Actions and recommendations to feed EU policy-making

- **Annual policy and advocacy action plan** developed on the basis of our analysis of relevant EC work programmes and roadmaps, EU Semester package as well as thanks to our networking activities throughout the year.
- **Online meeting of the EP interest group on Informal Carers** (28th November 2023) on the topic "Addressing care poverty: how inequalities prevent older people to access the support they need".
- **Online meeting of the Eurocarers Policy Working Group** (9th November 2023) to discuss and establish principles for employing informal carers. Topics included evaluating current contracting practices, broadening carer choice and collaboration between informal and formal carers, and defining practical criteria for contracting unpaid informal carers.
- **Ad hoc consultations of our Policy and Young Carers Working Groups** throughout the year **regarding the development of 8 Position papers and consultation responses, including:**
 - Eurocarers' response to the EC call for evidence on a comprehensive approach to mental health (February 2023)
 - Eurocarers' response to the EC call for evidence on the 2023 Strategic Foresight Report (March 2023)
 - Exploring the Physical and Mental Health Implications of Informal Caregiving (June 2023)
 - Caring for Loved Ones at the End of Life (September 2023)
 - A White Paper on bladder cancer to leverage legislative opportunities for better support of patients and carers in Europe (September 2023)
 - A lifetime of Caring – Who cares? (October 2023)
 - A joint call to action on UN Day of care and support (October 2023)
 - Eurocarers' EU election manifesto (November 2023)



- **Face-to-face meeting of the Eurocarers Young Carers Working Group (EYCWG)** held on the 26 May 2023, in Berlin to consult young carers (14 participants from 7 countries) on our work around the implementation of the EU Care Strategy, our European Carers Day campaign 2023 as well as the organisation of the International Young Carers Conference 2024.
- **Review of the policy environment of relevance to care and caring throughout the EU**, through the update of our online overview table "Number of carers and existing support measures across the EU" as well as through the development of a series of country profiles aiming to capture the policies and practices in place as regards care and caring.

Priority 2 - Bridge-building actions between EU level and national actors

- **Co-organisation/contribution to six in-country policy dialogues on the situation and needs of carers as well as on possible solutions to address them**, including:
 - A national event on carers research organised in Oslo, Norway on the 16th March 2023;
 - A hybrid conference entitled 'Mainstreaming Care in the European Year of Skills 2023: Strategies and measures to strengthen informal and formal care', held in Berlin on the 26th May 2023;
 - The 7th Caring for Carers Conference held in Athens on the 16th June 2023;
 - A policy event highlighting past accomplishments and outlining future priorities, entitled "The next Chapter, Making carers rights a reality", held in Edinburgh, Scotland on the 4th October 2023;
 - A symposium around the European Carers Day campaign, held in Athens on the 6th October 2023; and
 - The hybrid Swedish Carers Days conference held from Karlstad on the 25th October 2023
- **Study Visit on the topic "From competition to collaboration: The interface between informal and formal carers"**, held in Glasgow, Scotland on the 2-3 October 2023. The visit brought together 31 participants from 13 countries, including carers' organisations, universities and research institutes.
- **Two new briefings to complement our 'why carers count' series** on:
 - What Lies Ahead for Mental Health in the EU? (August 2023); and
 - The European Semester 2023: how to build on the increasing focus on care? (November 2023)
- **Ad-hoc partnerships and collaborations with various CSOs** to conduct joint publications and advocacy activities. These include partnerships with the European Institute of Women's Health (EIWH), the World Bladder Cancer Coalition, the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), as well as with the OECD on topics related to social dialogue and social protection for Long-Term Care. Eurocarers is also actively involved with the Social Platform and Social Policy Officer Group, which comprises approximately 30 social NGOs. Collaboration extends to engagement with the WHO to ensure the meaningful involvement of older individuals and carers in long-term care. Furthermore, Eurocarers promotes the newly-established International Day of Care and Support, aligning it with the European Carers Day campaign. Additionally, Eurocarers contributes to the development of an online information and training platform tailored for informal carers, following its recognition as a Non-State Actor.

Priority 3 - Awareness-raising and dissemination

- Eurocarers' 4th celebration of European Carers Day (ECD) focused on the theme of "Work-Life-Care balance," aiming to highlight the issue of unbalanced caregiving responsibilities and disparities among individuals. The campaign emphasised multilingualism by translating PR materials into 14 languages, promoting inclusivity across diverse linguistic communities. A new addition was the introduction of a



podcast series, attracting significant interest and becoming a focal point for future campaigns. The campaign's impact extended beyond Eurocarers' network, with strategically tailored PRs disseminated at both EU and national levels, reaching nearly 1000 recipients, including press contacts and MEPs. The Eurocarers website attracted over 5,000 visitors in October, peaking on ECD. Sister organisations, partners, MEPs and influential entities such as the EPP Group of the EP, WHO Europe, Eurofound and others lent their support to the campaign.

- Continuous enhancement of the **Eurocarers website** (www.eurocarers.org) as a user-friendly information hub on care, carers and caring, with updated info on the situation and needs of carers in Europe, EU/national policies with a bearing on carers' life, Eurocarers' positions, promising promises as well as practical advice (such as toolkits) to help carers in their daily caregiving activities;
- **9 editions of the newsletter** disseminated among more than 200 readers
- **Face-to-face meeting of the Eurocarers Research Working Group (ERWG)** in Ancona, Italy, on the 30th November and 1st December 2023. The event was co-hosted by the National Institute of Health and Sciences on Ageing (INRCA). Over the two-day programme, participants engaged in discussions on ongoing research, identified existing gaps, explored the potential impacts of AI in the caregiving sector, discussed criteria used by public authorities to support carers, outlined the scope of a future online information/training platform in collaboration with the WHO and the EC and fostered synergies among Eurocarers members.
- Various **articles** and **podcasts**.
- **Annual report 2022**, published in May 2023.

Priority 4 - Network organisation and management

- **4 meetings of the Eurocarers Board**;
- **Face-to-face Annual General Meeting**, held in Berlin, Germany on the 25-26 May;
- **Five knowledge-sharing sessions** were conducted as part of AGM 2023, including:

A World Café discussing 1. methods to enhance the influence of carers through establishing new carers' organisations across Europe and expanding our network, 2. reinforcing carer evidence by gathering and generating compelling data about carers and 3. guiding the development of new or improved carer policies using the momentum created by our community thus far and the recent launch of an EU Care Strategy.

4. A Research Tour de Table was also held in order to assess ongoing research activities and priorities within our network.

5. Finally, a Workshop served to plan our communication strategy for European Carers Day 2023, focusing on the theme "Work, Life and Care – Trade-offs or Synergies?"

Way Forward

Stey provided a brief overview of the Secretariat and Board's plans for our Work Programme and Budget for 2025, noting that the structure will remain largely similar to previous versions. He mentioned that the European Commission's call for proposals related to our Partnership Agreement and core grant for 2025 is now open, with a submission deadline of 20th June. As usual, he invited member organisations to share



their views on the types of activities they would like us to organise in the coming months and years, as well as specific topics that should be explored by our network. Members are encouraged to contact the Secretariat at any time with their suggestions.

Stey also reminded the Assembly that part of our annual budget can be used to co-organise activities, such as study visits, policy dialogues and communication initiatives, at national and regional levels. This aligns with our ambition to connect international and national policy agendas and serve the collective interests of our organisation.

The General Assembly did not raise any specific remarks or questions regarding the proposed approach for our key activities and budget for 2025, which will be partly funded through the EaSI programme. Consequently, the Board and Secretariat will proceed with the development and submission of our annual proposal in accordance with the work programme structure presented to the GA.

Election of new Board members

As per tradition, the election of our new Board members was conducted online prior to our meeting in Brussels. This approach not only enabled the General Assembly to fulfil its rights and obligations but also provided the Assembly with more time to focus on the meeting's content and next steps in our collective and respective work.

In accordance with Article 15 of our internal rules, each full member organisation in good standing has the right to nominate one person to serve on the Board. The Board is structured into three panels: Directors nominated by Tier I members, Directors nominated by Tier II members and a 'management and technical' panel consisting of up to four co-opted individuals to enhance the Board's expertise.

Based on our membership count at the time of nominations, there were 13 Tier I and 26 Tier II Full Members, resulting in a total of five and three Board seats for the Tier I and Tier II categories, respectively. With some seats already filled, four vacancies were available in the Tier I category.

Following the nomination period (1st to 30th April), our Secretariat received four nominations from Tier I full members. As the number of nominations matches the available seats in this category, a vote is unnecessary as per Article 15.3 of our rules. Consequently, we are delighted to welcome (or confirm) the following four Board members: John Dunne (Family Carers Ireland), Sebastian Fischer (wir Pflegen e.V.), Emily Holzhausen (Carers UK) and Marie Lenstrup (Carers Denmark).

On behalf of the network, Sari warmly congratulated our new Board members and requested the Secretariat to communicate these changes in our governance structure to the competent authorities (Official Journal, business registry, bank, etc.) as required by Belgian law. She also took the opportunity to reflect on her concluding five-year term as Eurocarers President and thanked our departing Board member and Treasurer, Anita Vatland (Norwegian National Alliance for Informal Carers, Norway), for her continuous efforts and dedication over the past few years.

The General Assembly held a discussion regarding the appointment of our new President, Vice-President and Treasurer, following the end of the mandates of our current President and Treasurer. In recent years,



the Board has allocated these roles among its members before informing the General Assembly. However, to reinforce our democratic and transparent process, **it was agreed that the first meeting of the newly-elected Board (scheduled for after the summer) will be dedicated to identifying potential candidates for the three key positions. An online election will then be held shortly thereafter, involving all voting members. If an election is unnecessary, the nominations for President, Vice President and Treasurer will be confirmed by full members.**

At this point in the meeting, Henk Nies (Vice-President Research) took over as chair. On behalf of the General Assembly, Henk warmly thanked Sari and Anita for their unwavering commitment and positive contributions to our network's work over the years.

Presentation of new Eurocarers members

Henk informed the group that four new member organisations have joined the Eurocarers network since our AGM last year. He therefore gave the floor to **Iveta Ždilova** (Board member) who moderated a session regarding the work of our new members (1 full members tier I, 1 full members tier II and 2 Associates). Those in attendance were invited to briefly present their activities and the nature of their interest in Eurocarers' work. Our new member organisations include:

Full Members Tier I

- University of Birmingham (School of Social Policy) – UK

Full Members Tier II

- Steunpunt Mantelzorg, Belgium

Associates

- Alfa Human Service – Czech Republic
- Longevidade Digital - Portugal

Reflecting on our past, shaping our future

Stecy gave an overview of our Network's progress since its creation and highlighted a few pathways for future development, thanks to the remarkable groundwork laid by Frank Goodwin, co-founder and "historian" of Eurocarers.

In 2004, the consortia of two EU-funded projects, EUROFAMCARE and CARMEN, recognised the necessity of establishing a European NGO to advocate for the interests of informal carers. The Netherlands, holding the EU Presidency at the time, facilitated a pivotal meeting in Maastricht, which focused on voluntary engagement and corporate social responsibility. This gathering served as an opportune moment to unite the CARMEN and EUROFAMCARE groups with other stakeholders, leading to the inception of Eurocarers.

Established legally in 2006, thanks to financial resources secured by Carers UK, Eurocarers consolidated its foundation. Ten guiding principles were delineated and the EP Interest Group on Carers was inaugurated the following year. In 2013, our proposal for an EU initiative on informal carers was presented at the European Parliament for the first time, marking a significant milestone in our advocacy efforts.



Our growing visibility and relevance prompted our first partnership agreement with the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) in 2014, culminating in the establishment of our Brussels Secretariat. Since then, our network has flourished and our message has reverberated across a plethora of international policy developments spanning long-term care, work-life balance, gender equality, youth, health, new technologies for care and caring, as well as research.

The launch of the EU Care Strategy in 2022 represents the latest testament to our impact over the years and serves as a catalyst for our future endeavours.

[Trend in Budget and Revenue](#)

Over the past decade, Eurocarers has seen a consistent growth trajectory in its total budget and revenue. With an average total budget/revenue of approximately €475,000 over the last ten years, there has been a notable increase in recent years. In the more recent five-year period, this average has even risen to around €490,000. This growth is largely attributed to the support received through the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) grant, which is closely correlated with our level of expenditure.

[Expenditure Trends](#)

In the last five years, our average total expenditure has ranged between €470,000 and €490,000. Despite fluctuations, we have managed to maintain financial stability, breaking even and even generating a small profit in recent years. However, a significant trend in our expenditure is the rising trajectory of staff costs. This increase is primarily due to the high employment costs in Belgium, where wages and salaries are regularly adjusted to reflect changes in the cost of living. In 2023 alone, these costs increased by 12%, significantly impacting our financial allocations. Additionally, while it looks like the cost of our work programme has remained stable at first glance, expenses related to face-to-face meetings, such as our AGM and Working Group meetings, have seen exponential growth. As a result, implementing our entire work programme solely through face-to-face events would pose significant challenges.

[Relationship between Income and Expenditure](#)

It is crucial to recognise the close relationship between our income and expenditure levels. Our core grant from the European Commission is directly tied to our annual costs, with an agreed threshold above which the EC ceases to contribute. Additionally, our network is required to contribute its share to the cost of our Work Programme. Over the years, Eurocarers has experienced three distinct co-funding periods. From 2014 to 2017, our organisation covered its co-financing through a combination of in-kind and in-cash contributions. Since 2018, only in-cash contributions have been allowed, with an imposed rate of 20% of our total budget. This rate was temporarily reduced by the EC to 10% in 2022, in its efforts to support non-profit organisations facing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and inflation.

These shifts underscore Eurocarers' adaptability in securing resources to support our mission and activities. However, it will be essential for our network to develop future-proofed fundraising strategies to anticipate potential inflations and increases in our co-financing rates in the years to come. Several members suggested that the Board review its current sponsorship guidelines to potentially increase income from a wider range of non-governmental and corporate sponsors.



Motion

Sebastian provided a brief overview of the motion jointly submitted by VOCAL, the Coalition of Carers in Scotland and wir pflegen. Informal carers across Europe play a critical role in providing 80% or more of all care. While care and caring are topics that have gained political traction in recent years, demographic shifts, a shortage of skilled care staff and conservative family agendas threaten recent progress. Countries with robust carer-led advocacy organisations offer better recognition, rights and support for carers, and are better placed to defending these advances at times of economic downturn or changing environments. Eurocarers aims to bolster the development of strong carer-led organisations in regions with weak structures. As it celebrates its 20th anniversary, Eurocarers acknowledges some modest progress in this area.

The motion therefore calls on the Eurocarers Board to enhance Eurocarers' role in the development of national and regional carer-led advocacy organisations by:

- Initiating and conducting a study in 2024 to assess the prevalence and capacity of carer-led organisations in nations and regions;
- Developing a vision and recommendations for national and regional measures for governments and European partners;
- Formulating a strategic approach for Eurocarers' role in supporting the development of carer-led advocacy organisations, including capacity building and funding proposals; and
- Reporting on progress at the AGM 2025.

Following a rich discussion on the significance of enhancing the representation of informal carers across Europe, the General Assembly unanimously endorsed the essence and direction of the proposed motion (25 favourable votes of full members organisations present or represented / Quorum: 13 votes). Endorsing the proposal to formulate a strategic approach for Eurocarers' role in supporting the development of carer-led organisations, the Assembly requested the Board to clarify the underlying objectives of the motion and develop a comprehensive, achievable implementation plan to be presented at the AGM 2025.

AOB

No items were added to the AOB section of the agenda.

Henk Nies and Stecy Yghemonos expressed their gratitude to all participants for their active and ongoing engagement in our activities and discussions, marking the end of the AGM 2024.

End of AISBL's Annual General Assembly



Annex 1 – List of Participants to the AGM 2024

Kadi	Selma	European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research	Austria
De Bruyne	Naomi	Steunpunt Mantelzorg	Belgium
De Koker	Benedicte	Hogent	Belgium
Lambotte	Deborah	Hogent	Belgium
Van Wallegghem	Sylvia	Magenta	Belgium
Huikari	Sarah	Pecuj Doma	Czech Republic
Lenstrup	Marie	Carers Denmark	Denmark
Linnavirta	Iida Matilda	Carers Finland	Finland
Skand	Jonna	Organisations for Carers Network Finland	Finland
Tervonen	Sari	Carers Finland	Finland
Desrousseaux	Fleur	Métropole aidante	France
Fischer	Sebastian	wir pflegen e.V.	Germany
Hoff	Andreas	GAT, Zittau/Goerlitz University	Germany
Stennert	Birgit	wir pflegen e.V.	Germany
Makri	Marina	Greek Association of Alzheimer Disease and Related Disorders	Greece
Leleszi-Tróbert	Anett Mária	Institute of Mental Health, Semmelweis University	Hungary
Dunne	John	Family Carers Ireland	Ireland
Casanova	Georgia	INRCA	Italy
Bakkerode	Henk	Eurocarers	Netherlands
Buynsters	Michael	Dutch Strategic Young Carers Alliance	Netherlands
Marking	Christine	Eurocarers	Netherlands
Nies	Henk	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	Netherlands
Pijpers	Roos	Movisie	Netherlands
Tomevska	Lidija	Community Development Institute Macedonia	North Macedonia
Vatland	Anita	Norwegian Alliance for informal Carers	Norway
Alves	Bruno	Cuidadores Portugal	Portugal
Miller	Emma	COCIS	Scotland
Warburton	Andrew	VOCAL - Voice of Carers Across Lothian	Scotland, UK



Tillingerová	Bohumíra	Chamber of Caregivers of Slovakia	Slovakia
Ždiřová	Iveta	Chamber of Caregivers of Slovakia	Slovakia
Ramovs	Ana	Anton Trstenjak Institute of Gerontology and Intergenerational Relations	Slovenia
Goirigolzarri	Andere	Grupo Servicios Sociales Integrados S. Coop. (Grupo SSI)	Spain
Skrt	Primoz	Acufade	Spain
Bengtsson	Åsa	Carers Sweden	Sweden
Holzhausen	Emily	Carers UK	UK
Yeandle	Sue	CIRCLE, University of Sheffield	UK

