

20 December 2022

### **AEIP statement on Council recommendation on Long-term care**

Due to the growing incidence of age-related conditions, demographic aging in Europe is leading to a growing demand for care and a need for resilient health systems that guarantee accessibility and quality of care.

Therefore, AEIP welcomes the [recommendation on affordable high-quality long-term care](#), adopted by the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) on 8 December 2022, recognizing it as an important step towards improving the accessibility, affordability and quality of long-term care and providing better support to informal carers.

The adopted recommendation aims to support European Union (EU) Member States in their efforts to improve access to affordable, high-quality long-term care. It provides guidance on the direction of reforms to address shared challenges of care accessibility, availability, quality and workforce, and on sound policy governance in long-term care, through national action plans.

#### *Measures to improve access, affordability and quality of long-term care*

AEIP welcomes the invitation to member states to take individual measures in implementing a quality, affordable and inclusive LTC strategy. Furthermore, AEIP highlights the importance of appointing an "appropriate coordination mechanism" to monitor and implement the strategy within 18 months as well as the EU's Social Protection Committee's work on common indicators for long-term care, that could be used to compare Member States and monitor progress.

AEIP particularly agrees with and stresses its support to article 4, according to which it is recommended that Member States ensure the adequacy of social protection for long-term care by ensuring timely, comprehensive and affordable access to long-term care.

This article addresses a main challenge identified by paritarian institutions, the loss of autonomy, including its management and occupational aspects. This problem affects all ages through disability, severe disability, illness or simply in the context of aging and it is mainly addressed through home support provided by caregivers. This solution can be expensive, and it is often not completely covered by public funds, being therefore financed by insurances.

### *Investing in prevention*

AEIP also welcome article 5e which recommends member states to ensure that long-term care services are well-coordinated with prevention, healthy and active aging and health services, and that they support autonomy and independent living, restoring as far as possible, or preventing the deterioration of physical or mental conditions.

In its position paper on the European Care Strategy and Long-term Care, AEIP stressed the need to create more awareness on the repercussions that ageing has on people's lives, labour markets and institutions of social protection. National strategies should also include the organisation of informational initiatives with the support of schools and all those entities that provide social services at national level, including occupational social protection providers. In synergy with the European Commission's "Healthy Lifestyles for All" campaign, this would translate, for example, on informing individuals on the importance of consumption and nutrition aspects as well as physical activity to develop healthy habits from early stage and prevent diseases in later stages of their life. Policy makers at national level should also implement policies that ensure a better transition from an active working life to retirement.

### *Minimum quality requirements and social protection for informal carers*

AEIP strongly supports Article 9 which recommends that Member States establish clear procedures to identify informal carers and support them in their caregiving activities in balancing work and care responsibilities, in accessing to the necessary training and providing them with access to social protection and/or to adequate financial support, while making sure that such support measures do not deter labor market participation.

In its position paper AEIP stressed how often informal care without any kind of support might negatively affect both informal carers and the quality of the service that is provided to the person in need: as informal carers, by definition, did not receive any training, they might inadvertently take the wrong decision with detrimental effects for the recipient. In addition, the responsibility and the tasks performed by informal carers heavily impact their personal and professional lives. It exposes them to a considerable amount of physical and mental exhaustion that can negatively affect their personal life, professional performance and their labor market participation. Because of this, informal carers are obliged to ask for sickness or unpaid leave, ultimately weighing on their wellbeing and on their work life balance. In this regards, Paritarian Institutions, thanks to collective agreements, can play a pivotal role in elaborating specific flexible work schemes or social protection coverage for informal carers who exercise a professional activity.

Furthermore, the AEIP supports the recommendation's call to improve the quality of employment of professional carers through social dialogue and effective regulation for vulnerable workers, such as domestic, cohabiting or migrant workers.

### *Next steps*

AEIP will closely follow the development of national strategies and through its national members it will engage with relevant stakeholders in the process.



European Association of Paritarian Institutions of Social Protection

AEIP and its members remain available to provide further information and feedback in relation to this dossier.

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