

EFFE's contribution for the UN 14th session of the

Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

Focus on the area “Participation in public life and

decision-making processes”

The European Union, until this date, has not established a European Strategy which would aim to address the specific issues older persons are facing in Europe, including their participation in public life and decision-making processes. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) adopted on the 12th of July 2023 an opinion on an “European Strategy for Older persons”, which called on the European Commission and the Member States to develop a comprehensive policy on older persons and ageing, but this work has not been followed-up by the European Council and the Commission yet.¹

The lack of a sectoral approach has a direct impact on the measures taken regarding equality, discrimination, gender dimensions, social inclusion, employment, training, or public participation of elderly individuals. This leads to oversights, and the elderly population finds themselves excluded from measures that could affect them, or even those that directly concern them, such as caregiving, for example. This issue is becoming critical, as the share of older people within the global population is increasing and will certainly continue to do so over the next decades: **guaranteeing that these citizens can act autonomously and fully enjoy their fundamental rights goes through qualitative, affordable, and accessible care services.**

The International Labor Organization estimates that by 2030, **1.9 billion children under the age of 15 and 200 million older people at or above the age of healthy life expectancy will need care.**²

To ensure domestic workers enjoy decent work and access to care within the framework of national care policies, the last policy brief of ILO on the issue urges governments ensure that the voices of domestic workers and employers of domestic workers are included in social dialogue.

This is important because, according to the ILO, social dialogue "encompasses all types of negotiation, consultation, or simply exchange of information between representatives of governments, employers, and workers on various terms, on issues of common interest related to economic and social policy." By extension, it refers to institutional or informal professional relationships within professional sectors as places for negotiation, expression, and confrontation.

However, if households are not recognized as employers, a significant portion of social partners is excluded, and the sector cannot thrive and remains invisible. Employers of domestic workers – whether households or public or private service providers – are rarely organized, making social

¹ [European Strategy for Older Persons, European and Economic Social Committee \(EESC\)](#)

² [New ILO policy brief calls for domestic workers to be included in care policies to ensure their rights at work, International Labor Organization \(ILO\)](#)

dialogue a challenge. Yet, even here, organizations of employers of domestic workers exist in a growing number of countries, which has paved the way for the conclusion of collective bargaining agreements in Argentina, Brazil (São Paulo), France, Italy and Uruguay, leading to higher levels of protection for domestic workers.

How can the elderly contribute to public life and decision-making processes if they remain invisible, especially on issues regarding ageing? The European and International Federation for Family Employment and Home Care (EFFE) is working to providing solutions and sharing good practices regarding these challenges. **A structuration of the sector is needed, inspired by countries that have reached this objective in order to give representativity to the aging population in discussions regarding their needs in care.**

The inexistence of structuration of domestic care sectors, results on a lack of attractivity and growing staff shortages : **this situation, in correlation with the growing demand for care services due to the ageing population, will worsen if important actions are not taken by the political leaders to ensure that everyone can benefit from care services and in any form they may desire (whether institutional or at home).**