

New research supports EPSU's concerns about privatisation of the care sector



(19 July 2021) The COVID 19 pandemic made visible the deficiencies in the care sector that EPSU affiliates have been protesting against for years. [New research](#) from [Investigate Europe](#) into the billion Euro business of elder care in Europe supports the view that many deficiencies stem from increasing privatisation and a lack of government quality checks and controls.

The research looks at the issue of for-profit care provision in 15 countries, from Portugal to Sweden, and the results are largely consistent with concerns repeatedly raised by Europe's public service unions. Amongst the findings, it is shown that some corporations actively hinder their workers from unionising, that certain financial investors in the care market are involved in tax avoidance, and that privatisation is often accompanied by cuts in staff and deficiencies in the quality of care.

The research is supported by [interviews with care home inspectors](#), responsible for ensuring that care homes meet minimum standards. Despite regional differences, the interviews with regulatory bodies across Europe revealed some common tropes: understaffed regulators, overworked employees and sometimes, questionable quality of care.

All the while, multi-national corporations that provide care, such as Orpea and Korian, are reaping huge benefits from Europe's ageing population and the increasing need for elder care. As the research shows, in the past four years alone, the 25 leading companies increased their capacity by 22 per cent. The share price of European market leader Orpea has doubled since 2015.

In light of the above, Investigate Europe asks the important questions: How does this profit-making business fit within a sector that is understaffed and under-financed? Why do governments allow this to happen? What are the consequences? And, are there alternatives to this cashing-in on an ageing society?

You can read more on Investigate Europe's research in a number of articles published with fifteen different media partners across Europe; including [Open Democracy](#) (EN), [Der Tagespiegel](#) (DE), [Follow the Money](#) (NL). You can also listen to one of their journalists, Harald Schumann, speaking about the investigation in [this podcast episode](#). Links to additional articles published will be posted to the Investigate Europe website in the coming days. Finally, we encourage you to share the materials on their [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) platforms.

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