

Newly announced European Care Strategy must prioritise critical workers



(16 September 2021) European Commission President **Ursula von der Leyen** announced a new European Care Strategy in yesterday's [State of the European Union speech](#). This new commitment to care and social rights is a welcome step forward from a Commission that has been slow to provide concrete commitments in this area. However, the strategy cannot lose sight of the workers that von der Leyen praised in her speech.

Inadequate conditions of 'critical workers' were acknowledged, but we must now ensure that the European Care Strategy keeps these workers at the fore. The 'applause' must be matched with fair payment and better working conditions. Care must be accessible to all and not just those in positions of privilege.

The success of the strategy depends on public funding. Fair taxation and a strong public care system are key. Von der Leyen acknowledges this in her speech, pointing out the profit made by companies taking advantage of social security systems. PSI estimates that the equivalent of [33,913,688 nurses' salaries](#) is lost globally to corporate and private tax abuse each year – an untenable figure that national governments and the European Commission must address.

President von der Leyen addressed the inadequate working conditions of care workers directly in her State of the European Union speech - but is now time to address their low wages, fewer protections and less security and improve collective bargaining.

We expect much from the new European Care Strategy. It cannot forget the workers that deliver care. They need more than simply platitudes shared at an annual speech. Long-term care is already protected in Principle 18 of the European Pillar of Social Rights – but this did not matter when it counted. It's time for the Commission to start talking the talk and start walking the walk.

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