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Conditions

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employment and work-related policies

# How to regulate live-in care work in Europe in the light of the European Care Strategy?

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Introduction: Background information about live-in carers in Europe

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# Numbers

- The phenomenon exists in all Member States (MSs), but in some it is limited to:
  - very specific situations (e.g. occasional end-of life care in Denmark),
  - or a small group of wealthy households (lower income MSs).
- Particularly common in 7 of the 27 MSs: Austria, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Spain
- Estimates:
  - AT: 60,000 live-in carers for 22,000 households
  - DE: 300,000–350,000 undeclared live-in carers for 180,000–200,000 households (Horn and Scheweppe, 2019b)
  - IT: 320,000 live-in carers (half of them regular) (DOMINA, 2019; Fosti and Notarnicola, 2019)
  - MT: 200 live-in carers
  - ES: 90,000 domestic elderly carers (Mercader et al, 2018)
- Future relevance: increases in recent years
  - Already before pandemic:
    - MSs where live-in care is common: absorbs part of ageing population's increased needs
    - MSs with below average income & bad access to long-term care, but incomes are growing (e.g. PL, SI)
    - Some other MSs (e.g. NL – while still only 'a few hundred')
  - Pandemic: CY domestic carers: from 14,825 (2019) to 15,947 (2020) to 18,754 (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2021)
  - Invasion of Ukraine: groups of refugees may become live-in carers

# Characteristics, and employment & working conditions issues

- Even more female than long-term care overall
  - AT: 95%, MT: 87%, ES: 91%
- Largely provided by foreign nationals, varying groups:
  - CY & MT mainly non-EU migrants through resident permit procedure (especially MT) or undeclared (more in CY)
  - AT & DE mainly mobile citizens in lower income border countries (SK & PL respectively)
  - EL, IT & ES often (undeclared) non-EU migrants (some RO in IT especially)
  - Regional differences: e.g. HR in IT border regions
  - Smaller scale: e.g. from Ukraine & Belarus in PL, Ukraine in HU, Bosnia Herzegovina in HR, Brazil in PT, Croatia in SI.
- Low paid
  - social services 21% below average\*; lowest paid: (social) carers, assistant nurses
  - domestic/live-in care generally excluded from statistical data and collective agreements, and among lowest paid, monthly at around €1,500 (DE), €400–700 (EL), €1,000– €1,200 (IT), €800 (MT – regulated) and €600–€1,000 (ES)
- Largely undeclared (rare in other parts of long-term care)
  - AT & MT mainly regulated (still about 2% undeclared); others largely grey/undeclared
- Long periods of work
  - Alternating (often 2 week) periods in carer's home with periods in home country (AT, DE)
  - Often 6-day weeks (e.g. EL, MT, PT)
- Sometimes agency work (AT, DE, NL)

Sources: Eurofound (2020), Long-term care workforce: employment and working conditions, <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/customised-report/2020/long-term-care-workforce-employment-and-working-conditions>

& Eurofound (2022), COVID-19 and older people: Impact on their lives, support and care, <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2022/covid-19-and-older-people-impact-on-their-lives-support-and-care>

\* Eurofound (2021), Wages in long-term care and other social services 21% below average | (europa.eu)

- Home care more generally has specific employment (*more platform work, vulnerable forms of self-employment, fewer permanent contracts*) and working conditions (*home environment hard to regulate and control*) issues
  - more issues where the household is the employer (often undeclared, and households as employers outside remits of inspectorates),
  - even more so when care provider lives-in with care receiver (including long hours)

# Solutions

## 1) Regularisation

- Austria since 2008
- Resident permit procedure (especially Malta)
- Italy: collective agreement (2013), but many remained undeclared
  - *Pandemic support for migrant domestic and rural workers dependent on regularisation. Despite a €500 fee for employers, 207,542 applications were made (85% of them domestic workers), including 176,848 requests for regularisation.*
- ILO Domestic Workers Convention: adoption & implementation! (but regularisation prerequisite)

## 2) Good access to formal, flexible high-quality home care (to varying extend: BE, DK, FI, FR, IE, NL, LU, SE)\*

**Sources:** Eurofound (2020), Long-term care workforce: employment and working conditions, <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/customised-report/2020/long-term-care-workforce-employment-and-working-conditions>  
& Eurofound (2022), COVID-19 and older people: Impact on their lives, support and care, <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2022/covid-19-and-older-people-impact-on-their-lives-support-and-care>

\*Eurofound (2020), Access to care services: Early childhood education and care, (europa.eu)

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