



# **European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI)**

## **Position**

### **Significance of home-based care from the EU perspective**

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Demographic change is taking place in several European countries, leading to an ageing, declining population and greater pressure on social security systems. At the same time, the number of people in need of care and home-based care are increasing. Such care is often – but not always – provided by female family members. Traditionally, this is also the case for home-based childcare. In addition, it must be stressed that every person has the right to decide on his/her own where he/she wants to make use of care service.

Over the past decades, European integration and legislation have contributed a great deal to gender equality and equal rights for men and women in social and professional contexts, but they have been unable to fully remove structural inequalities.

There is still a significant wage gap between men and women, the number of women holding leadership positions remains low and there is also inequality in terms of the distribution of household tasks and child-rearing duties, as well as of the care provided to ageing family members in need of care.

Traditional role models and gender typification mean that rearing children and care is frequently in the hands of women, as before.

This means that women – who are better educated than ever before – regularly put their own career and ambitions on the backburner, despite the fact that in theory, they have the same opportunities as men. The consequences are two-fold: often, well-trained female workers are not available in adequate numbers to take jobs, although the job market is desperately seeking qualified employees; on the other hand, women often also carry burdens in addition to their jobs.

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Generally speaking, across society, there is a need for the following:

- Greater flexibility in terms of working times for the workers, meaning that if necessary, employees can fulfil their daily care duties;
- The creation of comprehensive, affordable childcare options, aiming to reduce the double or even triple burden on workers' shoulders, as well as to allow workers to pursue their career without suffering drawbacks;
- Support for societal change away from gender stereotype-based work division and towards a partnership-based cooperation which implements a fairer division of domiciliary work, too;
- A push for quota legislation in the member states and on the European level, aiming to increase the number of women holding leadership positions; Such legislation must be supported by the creation of the necessary infrastructure;
- The allowance of prolonged care periods or absences with, at least, a compensation for disadvantages incurred in retirement arrangements and with a Europe-wide



guarantee that following such periods, workers may reintegrate their former jobs or positions without losing their reputation or suffering financial disadvantages;

- Information and awareness-raising campaigns to grant fair value to home-based care and carers. The increase in flexibility from the side of family members could delay the take-up of care services ;
- The creation of infrastructures for the provision of professional, affordable – and if required publicly subsidised – care services or structures to support carers.

The issue of home-base care does not only affect several member states, it may also bear economic consequences that require a Europe-wide approach.