



The United Nations Global Compact on Migration is a Key Opportunity to Recognise Rights of Migrant Domestic and Care Workers

BRUSSELS, 15 JUNE 2018 - Across Europe, many individuals and families rely on support to carry out essential domestic and care work, to look after children, clean or care for an elderly relative.

Without regulation and investment in the sector, domestic and care workers are often carrying out these vital jobs without adequate pay, holidays or protection. Further, an increasing number of these workers – the majority of whom are women - are undocumented migrants. Being undocumented leaves them unable to access the same rights as other workers and puts them at greater risk of exploitation, violence and abuse. Informal carers* who provide care outside of a professional or formal employment framework also play a key role.

An undocumented domestic worker from the Philippines said: *“I left my children with my mother in the Philippines so that I could come and work in Belgium as a domestic worker. Here, I take care of the children of my boss while I have to raise my own children through Skype. It is very hard certainly when my madame is rude and angry for little things. Sometimes she doesn’t want to pay me because she says I didn’t do a good job. I don’t want that anymore. What I do is work so it should be paid like that too.”*

On the occasion of International Domestic Workers Day (16 June), we urge the European Union and its member states to use the United Nations Global Compact on Migration** as an opportunity to recognise migrant domestic and care workers’ rights as workers.

The Global Compact on Migration is currently being negotiated by UN member states in New York. The EU and its member states should use this crucial opportunity to commit to reforms and policies that provide social protection and sustainable and quality domestic and care services for those needing care, and decent work for those working in the sector.

Two key reforms are needed in this context:

1. Decent labour migration opportunities should be enhanced for migrant workers to work in the sector. This includes ensuring that migrant workers can change employers.
2. Regular labour standards should apply to domestic and care work, and to all workers in these sectors, regardless of their residence status. This means ensuring that migrant workers can file a complaint against employers that fail to meet these standards, and access justice for wage theft and other violations, through labour courts, without risking arrest or deportation as a result.

Governments should allocate budgets for home-based health and care social services. To ensure affordability, accessibility and quality, services should be delivered through public services, as well as, where appropriate, through public-private partnerships that subsidise and properly regulate private service provision.

A sustainable domestic and care work model in Europe is integral to society as a whole, necessary to sustain social protection systems and facilitate equal participation in the labour market and work-life balance for families.

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Notes to editors:

** Informal carers are people of all ages who provide (usually unpaid) care to someone with a chronic illness, a disability or any other long-lasting health or care needs, outside of a professional or formal employment framework. According to recent research, informal carers across the EU provide over 80% of all care.*

*** The Global Compact on Migration will be the first, inter-governmentally negotiated agreement, prepared under the auspices of the United Nations, to cover all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. The final round of inter-governmental negotiations will be 9-13 July.*

See also:

- [Shared Concerns and Joint Recommendations on Migrant Domestic and Care Work](#), PICUM, 2017.

- [Website](#) for the Global Compact on Migration.

List of signatories:

1. Association for Integration and Migration (SIMI)
2. Caritas Europa
3. Comité contre l'esclavage moderne
4. CSC Bruxelles
5. Eurocarers
6. European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)
7. European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA)
8. European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)
9. European Federation for Services to Individuals (EFSI)
10. FAIRWORK Belgium
11. La Strada International
12. LEFÖ-IBF
13. Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
14. Red Acoge
15. The Salvation Army, EU Affairs Office
16. Uni Europa