

Joint Declaration of the Social Services Social Partners

Brussels, 23 March 2022

European Care Strategy: strong social dialogue in social services needed

The social services sector is a significant economic and social contributor in Europe, employing over 11 million people across the EU27 + UK. Social services are essential for social protection systems, equal opportunities, social cohesion, and inclusion. Yet they are facing major challenges in terms of funding, recruitment and retention, gender balance, ageing of the workforce, etc.

The Federation of European Social Employers (short: the Social Employers) and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) have addressed many of these issues, including through joint statements and position papers, such as on [Recruitment and Retention](#), on [Digitalisation](#), and on the [impact of Covid-19 on social services](#).

The Social Employers and EPSU strongly agree with the assessment of the situation and the objectives stated in the Call for Evidence for the European Care Strategy, especially concerning the rising demand for long-term care, the availability of and access to care, the quality of services, and the working conditions in the sector.

As stated in our December 2021 [joint position paper on the European Care Strategy](#), we call together for a European Care Strategy that addresses and anticipates workforce needs and challenges. For this, a constructive and regular social dialogue, both at national and EU level, is needed. Capacity building in those countries where social dialogue is currently weak or non-existent is also crucial.

Setting up a Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Social Services at EU level, as jointly requested in 2021 by the Social Employers and EPSU, the two representative social partner organisations in social services, will be essential to address the challenges at hand, ensure access to good quality and affordable social services and improve working conditions.

With this joint declaration, presented and adopted during the Social Services Social Dialogue pilot meeting on 23 March 2022, the Social Employers and EPSU reiterate their readiness and commitment to go further. After the approval of our joint request by the European Commission, we will contribute to the successful implementation of the EU Care Strategy, by working together in the framework of an EU sectoral social dialogue committee for social services.

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President Social Employers

Jan Willem Goudriaan
EPSU General Secretary