

Press Statement

Unpaid Family Carers set a New Signal in Europe First European Carers Day – 6 October 2020

A premiere in Europa.

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On 6 October we are celebrating the first European Carers Day. In different languages we are sending the same message:

We are unpaid carers.

We are essential.

We deserve better support!

As the largest pillar of care, families provide around 80% of all care across Europe.

„European Carers Day is a signal of recognition and awakening. Across Europe new movements of family carers are forming and strengthening their resolve. Instead of timid care reforms they demand genuine recognition, much improved support and a voice as equals for the people providing unpaid family care,” says Christian Pälmke, Referent für Pflegepolitik of the federal association *wir pflegen e.V.*

The first European Carers Day was initiated by Eurocarers, the European umbrella organisation for unpaid family carers. The campaign acknowledges that family carers in Europe receive widely differing supports. Some countries lay the responsibility for care solely at the door of families, others build mostly on formal care. Behind these approaches hide some critical question: Who is responsible for care in our society? How is that responsibility shared in solidarity? What is the central political driver of care: human need or profits?

In Scandinavian countries care needs are large catered for by state and regional provision. Sweden invests significantly more money in care than Germany and care support is provided earlier and more comprehensively. But even Sweden increasingly debates the reduction of statutory care provision and an increase in privatisation.

Some countries still lack legal frameworks for long term care. For example, Slovenia



only recently published a first white paper designed to regulate the need and entitlements for long term care. Sadly, family carers hardly feature in these proposals.

The Corona pandemic has further highlighted the problems, in Germany too. Institutional care is a part of the problem, not the solution. The overwhelming majority of people – well over 90% in Germany – prefer well financed care support in their own homes. Yet the pressures on home-based care increase relentlessly – everywhere support and financial security for family carers is lacking.

The core of the problem are care systems which delegate the responsibility for care to families. By the way: The German government still owes carers the long-heralded *Entlastungsbudget* (care service budget) – a promise of the coalition agreement [in 2018]. And: For the reconciliation of work and care, Germany still follows a loan principle instead of earnings compensation. The victims are always family carers.

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„Unpaid care provided by families is essential for all care systems and gladly received by all countries, but is rarely fully acknowledged, still less often adequately supported. The European Carers Day signals a new self-awareness – unpaid family carers are raising their voices for a sustainable care revolution in Europe and also in Germany,” says Christian Pälmke.

European Carers Day <http://carersday.eu/campaign-material/>

wir pflegen e. V. www.wir-pflegen.net

wir pflegen ist the *Interessenvertretung und Selbsthilfeorganisation pflegender Angehöriger* in Germany. wir pflegen was founded in 2008 gegründet and is a member of Eurocarers.

Eurocarers www.eurocarers.org

Eurocarers is the European Association Working for Carers. Eurocarers was formed in 2006 and today has 71 member organisations in 28 European countries.

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