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# **Domestic and Care Workers in Europe: An Intersectional Issue**

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**AN EQUINET REPORT**



**WORKING GROUP ON GENDER  
EQUALITY**

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*\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

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# **I. Introduction to care work and care workers**

# 1. Care work and care workers: a gender equality issue, trends, and patterns

In most European countries, domestic and care work is mainly provided by women (many with a migrant background) and families, often in an informal way. As a result, care work is not always recognised, measured, and valued. It is considered as unskilled and its monetary value remains invisible. This hinders women's economic independence, female employment, professional patterns, and career progression.

However, **care remains crucial to face the current and forthcoming challenges of our societies.**

Population is rapidly ageing and the share of those aged 80 and over has almost doubled in the last 20 years<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, parents strive to combine work with domestic and care responsibilities. In fact, half of all children in the European Union aged less than three years (49%) were cared for exclusively by their parents in 2018<sup>2</sup>. Care for adults is also crucial as 24.77% of European population over sixteen years have some form of disability which bounds their activities, with 7% of them having severe limitations<sup>3</sup>.

The COVID-19 pandemic has surfaced the importance as well as the fragility of the care economy. The extent to which the care economy relies on women's unpaid and underpaid work has also been exposed and made visible, as never before<sup>4</sup>. Many people had no choice but to take on care responsibilities. School closures led parents to home schooling children while struggling to fulfil their labour and domestic duties. Older population in care facilities revealed highly vulnerable to the virus, making home care more appealing. In fact, by May 2020 in some European countries COVID-19-related fatalities in long term care facilities exceeded 60% of all reported deaths<sup>5</sup>. The long working hours, stress, and anxiety faced by health providers underscored the urgent need for long-term care strategies. In this scenario, women faced a disproportionate impact, with an increased burden in care responsibilities at home while being overrepresented among frontline workers providing care and other essential services. Women were 76% of healthcare workers (doctors, nurses, midwives, and staff in care homes), 93%

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<sup>1</sup> Eurostat (9 July 2020). *Demography of Europe* <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/digpub/demography/bloc-1c.html?lang=en>

<sup>2</sup> Eurostat (27 April 2020). *Childcare arrangements in the European Union*. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20200427-1>

<sup>3</sup> EU SILC (Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) and EU LFS (Labour Force Survey). S. Grammenos/M. Priestley, 2020: *Europe 2020 data and people with disabilities*.

<sup>4</sup> See [Covid-19 and the care economy: immediate action and structural transformation for a gender-responsive recovery](#). Policy Brief n°16, UN Women 2021; [Whose time to care? Unpaid care and domestic work during covid-19](#). UN Women 2020; Paper on [Unpaid care work in times of the COVID-19 crisis: Gendered impacts, emerging evidence and promising policy response](#); [Women at the core of the fight against COVID-19 crisis](#). OCDE Version 1st April 2020.

<sup>5</sup> European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (19 May 2020). *Surveillance of COVID19 at long-term care facilities in the EU/EEA* (p.3). <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/covid-19-long-term-care-facilities-surveillance-guidance.pdf>

childcare workers and teachers, 95% of domestic cleaners and helpers, and 86% of personal care workers<sup>6</sup>. Additionally, nearly all women in the European Union (92,6%) are regular, unpaid carers<sup>7</sup>.

In this context, care work has been acknowledged as essential, and social recognition of care sector workers has risen during the pandemic. However, this recognition is yet far away from being translated into better and adequate salaries, working conditions, and social security rights for care workers<sup>8</sup>.

The objective of this paper is to showcase the diverse reality of domestic and care workers in Europe as a gender equality issue, from an intersectional perspective. In addition, this paper aims at encouraging all stakeholders involved at EU and national level, including equality bodies, to take urgent action to face the gender care gap, and to address gender discriminations in the care economy and the care sector.

## 2. What is a care worker?

It should be stated that the definition of care workers is not homogeneous among Europe. **Care workers do not encompass the same reality and are actually under significantly different legal frameworks depending on which system of care they belong.** The historical background of the state's legal responsibility for its citizens and the general population's attitude towards the role of informal caregivers may determine the statutes of care workers and the way in which care services are organised and provided.

To investigate this matter, during the summer of 2021 Equinet surveyed members in Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Greece, Malta, Portugal and Spain. The results of the survey uncovered basic patterns in member states, which group the definition of care worker into three different models: **family system, migrant system and dual system.**

### Family System

In this model, care work is considered a family issue and so it is excluded from the public sphere and public debate. There is no legal definition of care and so there is no distinction between domestic and care workers. Care workers are supposedly protected by national general labour law. However, in this model most of care work is undeclared and workers do not have access to adequate pay, social protection, or labour rights. There is no statistical data to depict their situation. The vast majority of workers are women in precarious conditions. Additionally, many of them have a migrant background, which leads to intersecting issues related to culture and poverty.

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<sup>6</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality. *Essential Workers*. <https://eige.europa.eu/covid-19-and-gender-equality/essential-workers>

<sup>7</sup> Council of the European Union (2 April 2020). *Council Conclusions on Tackling the Gender Pay Gap: Valuation and Distribution of Paid Work and Unpaid Care Work (p.8)*. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/47063/st13584-en20.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Beyond Covid-19: A feminist plan for sustainability and social justice. 2021 UN Women <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2021/feminist-plan-for-sustainability-and-social-justice-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3235>

## Migrant System

Families in this system have dealt with difficulties to provide care to family members by outsourcing care to migrants from third countries who reside with their employers. Care work has accordingly evolved from being a family issue to being a migrant issue. As in the family model, there is no legal definition, neither a distinction between care and domestic service.

Regulation departs significantly from the general labour frame and, in fact, migrants are subjected to a particular status which may be controlling rather than protective. Thus, they are an extremely vulnerable group since, in addition to their poor living and working conditions, they fear losing their residence or work permits.

Foreign domestic workers are primarily women aiming to provide their families in their countries of origin with financial support. Poor working conditions make it difficult for them to socialise or organise into groups. Furthermore, because of their gender and status as migrants they can be subjected to various intersecting discriminations.

## Dual Model

In this model there is a legal definition of domestic service and workers. A distinction between care and domestic service has been made and this distinction may have been transferred to the legal frame. Accordingly, care workers' reality in this model is dual.

On one hand, domestic or household workers are those employed in private family homes, providing services and assistance in the home environment. These services may consist of housework, the direction or care of the home, or the care or attention of family members. National regulation for domestic service usually means a special status for domestic workers with less social protection than regular workers, sometimes with limited or no to collective bargaining, and with remuneration closer to the minimum salary. Most of all domestic workers in private homes are women, with a great proportion of female migrant workers who offer their services as 24 hours' workers or interns. In many countries they are cross border workers hired by placement agencies. There are still high rates of undeclared work and a lack of transparency.

On the other hand, those who fall under the category of carers are usually protected by general labour law provisions, with salaries and rights mainly defined under regulation and collective agreements. They may work as professional carers or personal assistance providing services to dependent people, assisting them with promoting and enhancing personal autonomy, whether at home or in public and private centres. Public services therefore are also care providers through various schemes. Even though women are still a majority among these workers there is a bigger proportion of men in the sector and also a greater proportion of care workers from national or European origin .

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Despite the differences said above, there are some common patterns in all these models that will be developed later.

### 3. Overview of the international legal framework

At the international and European level, legal references can be found for the provision of quality public care services and the social and labour protection of care workers, including for those who carry out their work in informal domestic environments.

Regarding the provision of quality public care services, in 1979, *article 11 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women*<sup>9</sup> commanded State Parties to encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities.

In 1981, the *ILO Convention 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities*<sup>10</sup> established in its article 5 that all measures compatible with national conditions and possibilities should further be taken to develop or promote community services, public or private, such as child-care and family services and facilities.

Inspired by the ILO Convention 156, the members of the Council of Europe in the revised version of the *European Social Charter (1996)*<sup>11</sup> understood that the obligation of parties to promote public or private childcare services applied both to dependent children and to other members of immediate family who clearly need care or support.

The *Beijing declaration in 1995*<sup>12</sup> already stated that care of children, the sick, and the elderly is a responsibility that falls disproportionately on women. It stated that the lack of insufficient services such as child care, continued to restrict employment, economic, professional, and other opportunities for women. The declaration also stated that women took on more unpaid work, such as the care of children and those who are ill or elderly, particularly when public services were not available. Among many actions to be taken, the Beijing declaration mentioned the reformulation of wage structures in female dominated professions such as nursing and child care with a view to raising their low status and earnings, and adopting policies to ensure the appropriate protection of labour laws and social security benefits for part-time, temporary, seasonal and home based workers. It also encouraged the provision of supporting social services in particular child care facilities.

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<sup>9</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979 . <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

<sup>10</sup> ILO Convention 156 on Workers with family responsibilities (art.5). [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C156](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C156)

<sup>11</sup> Council of Europe (2015) *European Social Charter, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Collective Text*. <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168048b059>

<sup>12</sup> Beijing Declaration and Platform for action (1995) [https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing\\_Declaration\\_and\\_Platform\\_for\\_Action.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf)

The *ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers*<sup>13</sup>, published in 2011, defines domestic worker as any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship. A person who performs domestic work only occasionally or sporadically and not on an occupational basis is not considered a domestic worker. The convention states that each Member State shall take measures towards ensuring equal treatment between domestic workers and general workers in relation to normal hours of work, overtime compensation, periods of daily and weekly rest, paid annual leave, and collective agreements, taking into account the special characteristic of domestic work. It also empowers migrant domestic workers by commanding members to ensure the effective applications of the provision of the Convention to migrant domestic workers.

Within the European Union, the right to care was established for the first time in *principle 18 of the European Pillar of Social Rights*<sup>14</sup>, which stated that everyone had the right to quality affordable long-term care services. In this setting, the European Union supports Member States in implementing long term care policies such as the *Work Life-Balance Directive 2019/115*<sup>15</sup>. It recalls that member states should take into consideration that the equal uptake of family-related leave between men and women also depends on other appropriate measures, such as the provision of accessible and affordable childcare and long-term care services which are crucial for the purpose of allowing parents, and other persons with caring responsibilities to enter, remain in, or return to the labour market<sup>16</sup>. Principle 18 of the European Pillar of Social Rights also sets a definition of carer as a worker providing personal care or support to a relative, or to a person who lives in the same household as the worker, and who is in need of significant care or support for a serious medical reason, as defined by each Member State.

Social and labour protection of care workers, especially those who carry out their work in informal domestic environments, has also been addressed at international agreements. Within the European Union recent legislative measures and actions recognise and address the needs of informal care<sup>17</sup>. For example, the European Commission presented in 2016 a revision of *the European Union Legislation on social security coordination*. The proposal intended to clarify what long term care benefits are and

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<sup>13</sup> International Labour Organization (2011). [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C189](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C189)

<sup>14</sup> European Commission. *The European Pillar of Social Rights in 20 principles*. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en)

<sup>15</sup> European Parliament and council (2019) Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32019L1158>

<sup>16</sup> Social Protection Committee and European Commission. Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (June, 2021) *Long-Term Care Report: Trends and challenges and opportunities in an ageing society*. <https://www.ifsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/KE-09-21-202-EN-N-1.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Social Protection Committee and European Commission. Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (June, 2021) *Long-Term Care Report: Trends and challenges and opportunities in an ageing society*. <https://www.ifsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/KE-09-21-202-EN-N-1.pdf>

where mobile citizens can claim such benefits<sup>18</sup>. Long term care would be considered a distinct branch of Social Security and long term care benefits may mean any benefit in cash, kind, or combination of both<sup>19</sup>.

The *EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025*<sup>20</sup>, also aims at closing the gender care gap, and calls on investing in care services as key to support women's participation in paid work and their professional development, as well as on its potential for job creation.

Also with the *European Council Recommendation on access to social protection*<sup>21</sup> Member States are committed to extend the coverage of social protection systems to non-standard forms of employment, including the long-term care workforce.

Noting the relevant importance of care, the gender care gap, and the care economy, in September 2021 the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men issued an *Opinion on the care gap in the EU: A holistic and gender-transformative approach*<sup>22</sup>. The document reflects on the value of care in our society with a holistic approach, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and calls on Member State and European institutions to address the care gap and care work in a gender-transformative way.

Additionally, the next EU Council Conclusions in late 2021 will be devoted to "*Tackling the gender pay gap: Valuation and distribution of paid work and unpaid care work*". The Council conclusions acknowledging the current existing gender gaps and challenges call on EU Institutions, agents, and Member States to effectively take actions to address current and upcoming challenges of the care economy and to narrow the gender gaps and existing discriminations.

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<sup>18</sup> European Commission (13 December 2016) *Fairness at the heart of Commission's Proposal to update EU rules on Social Security Coordination*.

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=849&newsId=2699&furtherNews=yes>

<sup>19</sup> European Commission (13 December 2016). *Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems and regulation (EC) No 987/2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004*

<sup>20</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the committee of the regions: A union of equality: gender equality strategy 2020-2025. COM(2020) 152 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0152&from=EN>

<sup>21</sup> Council of the European Union (8 November 2019) *Council Recommendation of 8 November 2019 on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed, 2019/C 387/01*. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32019H1115%2801%29>

<sup>22</sup> Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (13 September 2021). *Opinion on The care gap in the EU: a holistic and gender-transformative approach*. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/aid\\_development\\_cooperation\\_fundamental\\_rights/opinion\\_care\\_gap\\_2021\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/opinion_care_gap_2021_en.pdf)

According to a recent opinion of the Advocate General of the Court of Justice of the European Union<sup>23</sup>, excluding domestic workers from unemployment benefits, where those workers are almost exclusively women, constitutes indirect discrimination based on sex, which is not justified and contrary to EU law.

UN Women has recently launched the new “*Feminist plan for sustainability and social justice*”<sup>24</sup> aiming providing a practical roadmap for putting gender equality, social justice, and sustainability at the centre of the recovery and transformation. The Feminist Plan calls on placing care at the centre of a sustainable and just economy.

It seems evident that attention to caregiving policies is increasing at international and at EU Level. However, it is crucial to change mind-sets in addressing the right to be cared of and the rights of carers, and therefore the care economy. Ensuring labour decent conditions and quality of formal and informal care may be address by a much needed European Care Strategy. In this context setting minimum standards and requirements which could be reinforced via registration, accreditation, monitoring, inspections and sanctions<sup>25</sup> may be a key instrument.

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<sup>23</sup> Court of Justice of the European Union, PRESS RELEASE No 168/21, Luxembourg, 30 September 2021  
<https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2021-09/cp210168en.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Beyond Covid-19: A feminist plan for sustainability and social justice. 2021 UN Women  
<https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2021/feminist-plan-for-sustainability-and-social-justice-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3235>

<sup>25</sup> Social Protection Committee and European Commission. Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (June, 2021) Long-Term Care Report: Trends and challenges and opportunities in an ageing society.  
<https://www.ifsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/KE-09-21-202-EN-N-1.pdf>



## **II. The risk of discrimination and unequal treatment of domestic and care workers from an intersectional perspective**

## Introduction\*

The situation of domestic and care workers differs from one country to another, depending on the legal and socio-cultural context. However, Equality Bodies of the EU Member States report many similar situations in which domestic and care workers are at risk of facing discrimination.

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Their vulnerability can only be understood from an **intersectional perspective** as their specific social position is influenced by the allocation of rights and resources on the basis of their gender, race, class, nationality/citizenship, legal status and language

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Within the care work sector, problematic conditions and precarity are prevalent. This applies in particular for domestic and care work<sup>26</sup> upon which long-term care in many European countries substantially relies<sup>27</sup>. Among all care workers, those working in private households, 24-hour and live-in care arrangements, are an especially vulnerable and heterogeneous group<sup>28</sup>. These often female migrant workforces are living in complex spaces of overlapping labour, migration and other legal regimes working under notably precarious and in many

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*\*The situations described in this section were collected through a questionnaire sent by Equinet to all EU Equality Bodies in the summer of 2021.*

<sup>26</sup> Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (2018). Shared concerns and joint recommendations on migrant domestic and care work. Working document. URL: [https://picum.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Working-document\\_Shared-concerns-recommendations-on-migrant-domestic-care-work\\_June-2018.pdf](https://picum.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Working-document_Shared-concerns-recommendations-on-migrant-domestic-care-work_June-2018.pdf) (16.09.21). Also, ILO Convention 189 on Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (art 1) [Convention C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 \(No. 189\) \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/convention/C189-Domestic-Workers-Convention-2011-No-189)

<sup>27</sup> B Bauer, Gudrun, and August Österle (2016). The Legalization of Rotational 24-hour Care Work in Austria: Implications for Migrant Care Workers, *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 23 (2), p. 192; Lutz, Helma, and Ewa Palenga-Möllnbeck (2010). Care work migration in Germany: Semi-compliance and complicity, *Social Policy & Society* 9 (3), pp. 421.; Näre, Lena (2013). Migrancy, Gender and Social Class in Domestic Labour and Social Care in Italy: An Intersectional Analysis of Demand, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39 (4), pp. 602; E EFFE European Federation for Family Employment and Home Care and EFSI European Federation of Services to Individuals (2020). Personal and Household Services (PHS): a key sector of the future Action Plan. European Pillar of Social Rights. URL: [http://www.efsi-europe.eu/fileadmin/MEDIA/publications/2020/EFSEFFE\\_joint\\_statement\\_EPSR\\_Action\\_Plan\\_October\\_2020\\_EN.pdf](http://www.efsi-europe.eu/fileadmin/MEDIA/publications/2020/EFSEFFE_joint_statement_EPSR_Action_Plan_October_2020_EN.pdf) (p 3); EFSI European Federation of Services to Individuals (2018). The United Nations Global Compact on Migration is a Key Opportunity to Recognise Rights of Migrant Domestic and Care Workers. [http://www.efsi-europe.eu/fileadmin/MEDIA/publications/2018/Joint\\_statement\\_MDW\\_Decent\\_Work\\_in\\_the\\_GCM\\_15\\_June.pdf](http://www.efsi-europe.eu/fileadmin/MEDIA/publications/2018/Joint_statement_MDW_Decent_Work_in_the_GCM_15_June.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Rogalewski, Adam, and Karol Florek (2020). The future of live-in care work in Europe. Report on the EESC country visits to the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and Poland following up on the EESC opinion on “The rights of live-in care workers”. [https://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/files/report\\_on\\_the\\_eesc\\_country\\_visits\\_to\\_uk\\_germany\\_italy\\_poland\\_0.pdf](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/files/report_on_the_eesc_country_visits_to_uk_germany_italy_poland_0.pdf)

cases legally insecure conditions. Their vulnerability can only be understood from an intersectional perspective as their specific social position is influenced by the allocation of rights and resources on the basis of their gender, race, class, nationality/citizenship, legal status, and language<sup>29</sup>. Other social features may be of relevance as well although not apparent in the data available<sup>30</sup>.

In 2021 members of the Equinet Working Group on Gender Equality have collected statistical data from 11 European countries. Though responses vary widely in their preciseness, the lack of statistical data on domestic and care work is salient in all of them. Nevertheless, patterns of discrimination risks applying to domestic and care work appear throughout several European countries despite regional specificities.

## 1. Feminized work

Despite the differences in data collection and definitions of the category *domestic care worker*<sup>31</sup> it is clear that a striking number of these workers are women<sup>32</sup>. In Germany and Malta over 80 % of domestic workers are registered as women, in Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Portugal and Spain the figures are even higher – over 90 %<sup>33</sup>. Similar numbers hold true for Italy as well<sup>34</sup>. In addition, countries without reliable data reporting state that domestic care workers are mostly women. These findings can certainly be applied to the subgroup of domestic 24-hour care workers<sup>35</sup>. Taking into consideration the overrepresentation of women in this area of work where empirical data is presented here, we can conclude that in a context of undeclared employment relationships a change in gender distribution would be very unlikely. At the same time, it is not possible to fully dissect gender from other relevant attributes such as migration background or legal status<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> Crenshaw, Kimberle (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. In: *Stanford Law Review* 43 (6), pp. 1241-1299.

<sup>30</sup> While for example Näre (2013, op cit) undertakes an intersectional analysis of domestic labor and social care in Italy focusing on economic and social class, gender, nationality and migrancy, Bauer and Österle (2016, op cit, p. 201) find that the age of older 24-hour migrant care workers from Slovakia and Bulgaria (60 years and upwards) is subjectively perceived as an obstacle in entering the care work job market in Austria.

<sup>31</sup> Here the terms domestic worker and domestic care worker are used interchangeably.

<sup>32</sup> PICUM 2018; EFFE and EFSI 2020, p. 2; EFSI 2018 (op cit)

<sup>33</sup> Austrian, Belgian, Cyprian, German, Maltese, Portuguese and Spanish questionnaires; in Austria 95 % of the 44.143 domestic 24-hour care workers in legal self-employment arrangements in 2013 were women (Bauer and Österle 2016, op cit, p. 197)

<sup>34</sup> Näre 2013 (op cit) p. 609.

<sup>35</sup> An exception is Austria providing statistical data for the subgroup of 24-hour care workers specifically: 94 % of 24-hour care workers in 2018 were women (Austrian questionnaire).

<sup>36</sup> European Agency for Fundamental Rights (2011). Migrants in an irregular situation employed in domestic work: Fundamental rights challenges for the European Union and its member states. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, p. 16

In 2021 members of the Equinet Working Group on Gender Equality have collected statistical data from 11 European countries. Though responses vary widely in their preciseness, the lack of statistical data on domestic and care work is salient in all of them. Nevertheless, patterns of discrimination risks applying to domestic and care work appear throughout several European countries despite regional specificities.

## 2. Precarious contracts and low wages

In most cases, domestic workers' **contracts** are precarious – part-time or temporary – and hourly workdays can multiply in several households. The description of the activities the domestic worker must perform is often ambiguous, which can lead to situations of excess or abuse by the employer. There are often no regulations in place for dismissal.

Therefore, employers can terminate employment without having to justify the cause, making the job security very precarious and dependent on the goodwill of the employer.

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When it comes to **remuneration**, domestic workers have little negotiation capacity, which sometimes entails setting wages below the legally established minimum salary.

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In Spain, regular domestic workers are not entitled to the unemployment subsidy granted to other workers under the general Social Security Regime. In Portugal, the protection against dismissal of pregnant workers, workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding, or male workers during parental leave (which is provided for in article 63 of the Labour Code) does not apply to domestic workers.

In Belgium, the system of service voucher employment for household services has improved the situation of these workers, granting them basic employment rights. Persons working with an intermediary service voucher agency can also benefit from the support of this agency in the contacts with the employer or in the case of any form of abuse. However, an important part of household services is still done by workers doing undeclared work.

When it comes to **remuneration**, domestic workers have little negotiation capacity, which sometimes entails setting wages below the legally established minimum salary. There is a lack of time control records, which hinders the remuneration of overtime and the proof in case of a claim. Often payments for domestic care work are close to the respective subsistence minimum<sup>37</sup> and generally low in comparison to other wages within the destination country<sup>38</sup>. This is likely to be the same for domestic 24-hour care work<sup>39</sup>. For example, in Cyprus the monthly earnings in the domestic and care sector amount to 309 € net income. In Austria a 24-hour care worker can expect a monthly income of 600 € to

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<sup>37</sup> Czech, Maltese and Spanish questionnaires; EFSI 2018; Ad-PHS Advancing Personal and Household Services (2020). Improving the working conditions of PHS workers: successful approaches identified by the Ad-PHS project. URL: <https://ad-phs.eu/ht8ag2/uploads/2021/05/ad-phs-ilo-c189-position-paper-final.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Austrian, Belgian, Cyprian and Hungarian questionnaires.

<sup>39</sup> For Austria see Bauer and Österle 2016, op cit, p. 197



1.500 € for a two-week stay per month<sup>40</sup>. While in this case wage prospects and rotational arrangements (or cross-border work) are fundamental reasons for becoming a 24-hour care worker, the particularly challenging conditions of 24-hour care and family responsibilities in the home country often do not allow longer work stays<sup>41</sup>.

**Gender pay gaps are common in the care work sector.** In Belgium there are gaps of 5 % among personal care workers and 8 % among cleaners and helpers. In Germany women earn 11.6 % less than men in nursing and 3.5 % less in geriatric care. And in Malta there has been a gender pay gap of 19.4 % in human health and social work activities in 2019<sup>42</sup>. When the gender pay gap is analysed, research shows that women with a migrant background are more impacted by the gender pay gap than women without a migrant background.

For domestic care work – including 24-hour care work and live-in arrangements – these numbers can serve as approximations pointing at an even increased precarity and vulnerability due to the intersection of gender, class, language, and legal status.

### 3. High migration ratio

#### Migration backgrounds

**A high number of domestic care workers in Europe has a migration background<sup>43</sup>.** This group is heterogeneous in the sense that migrant workers either immigrate from a neighbouring European country or from third countries. For instance, 43 % of domestic workers in Spain have a migration background of which 76.3 % immigrate from third countries such as Paraguay and Honduras. The other 23.7 % have European citizenships – mostly Romanian. In Cyprus 27.4 % of domestic and care workers have a Filipino, 23.8 % a Nepalese, and 23.3 % a Sri Lankan nationality. In general, only some workers have acquired citizenship, while some are cross border workers<sup>44</sup>. In Austria, for example, 99 % of 24-hour care workers split their time between their destination and home country in two-week or one-month-intervals<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Austrian questionnaire; Bauer and Österle 2016, op cit, p. 202

<sup>41</sup> Bauer and Österle 2016, op cit, pp. 202- 208

<sup>42</sup> Belgian, German, Greek and Maltese questionnaires

<sup>43</sup> Austrian, Belgian, Cyprian, Czech, German, Greek, Hungarian, Maltese and Spanish questionnaires; for Italy see Näre 2013, p. 608f.; for Germany see Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck 2010; PICUM 2018; EFFE and EFSI 2020, p. 2 (op cit)

<sup>44</sup> Austrian and German questionnaires

<sup>45</sup> Austrian questionnaire

## Financial reasons as motivation for migration

Domestic care workers often migrate for financial reasons as they are in many cases unable to find work and earn a living in their home countries<sup>46</sup>. Their migration is initiated by either themselves or their families in order to invest specifically (e.g. in buying a house) or financially support themselves and other family members (especially their children's education)<sup>47</sup>. Despite often being well-educated – from former vocational to academic achievements – these migrant women end up in precarious working conditions<sup>48</sup>. In particular women from outside the EU, often end up in domestic or care work because their qualifications are not recognised in the EU.

## Language barriers

Language barriers make it difficult to find one's way in questions of work-related bureaucratic procedures, legal rights, and social securities (e.g. pension rights, health and unemployment insurances). Here intermediaries like commercial placement agencies arrange registration formalities, social insurance coverage, and placement of workers<sup>49</sup>. However, this reliance on intermediaries itself carries risks as they can exploit the imbalance of resources to the detriment of the labour force<sup>50</sup>. In these cases, the socioeconomic resources of migrant workers have a direct effect on their ability to pay not only for migration-related travel expenses, but also for the cost of entering a legal job market. In addition, language barriers can affect workers' abilities to negotiate wages resulting in a wage discrimination that adds to the existing gender pay gap<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> Austrian, Cyprian and Czech questionnaires; for Austria see also Bauer and Österle 2016, op cit, p. 200

<sup>47</sup> For Austria see Bauer and Österle 2016, op cit, p 200. In her ACTRAV/ITC-ILO report on domestic workers Kristin Carls (2012, p. 8) mentions that in some countries, the number of native domestic care workers also seems to increase as a result of crises and rising unemployment rates in their home countries.

<sup>48</sup> For Germany see Lutz and Polenga-Möllenbeck 2010, op cit, p. 425. For Austria: the qualification of Bauer and Österle's (2016, p. 199) 14 interviewees vary between university degrees, higher school certificates and secondary school qualifications. Only one interviewee has a nursing diploma while others have completed basic care courses in their home countries.

<sup>49</sup> For Austria see Bauer and Österle 2016, op cit, p. 197; for Germany see Lutz and Polenga-Möllenbeck 2010, op cit, p. 424

<sup>50</sup> In the case of Austria, domestic care workers can get additional funding by the Austrian state. For this, workers require a qualification certificate. Allegedly some agencies offer the service to provide a false certificate of education that workers pay for. This can leave domestic care workers in a particularly vulnerable position in cases of blackmailing (Austrian questionnaire).

<sup>51</sup> Näre 2013, op cit, p. 615ff.

## Accessibility of labour markets

Depending on their migration background and legal status, domestic workers have different chances of movement on and legal access to the labour market<sup>52</sup>. Based on the EU freedom of movement and residence provisions, EU-nationals are free to reside and work in any member state<sup>53</sup>. Third country nationals need specific residence and work permits. The residence and work permits are usually linked to each other. This weakens domestic workers' bargaining position in relation to the employer and working conditions, putting them in an insecure situation.

In Austria 43.6 % of 24-hour care workers are Romanian, 37.7 % are Slovakian and 5.8 % are Hungarian citizens; in Belgium a majority of domestic care workers in the Flemish region are European citizens; in Germany a high number of care workers are cross border workers from Poland. An estimation for domestic and care workers in Greece states that many workers come from neighbouring countries such as Albania or Bulgaria, while in Hungary many of these workers are ethnic Hungarians from Romania or Ukraine<sup>54</sup>.

## 4. Informal domestic and care work: undocumented work and unprotected workers

Member States might provide some levels of protection for legal and declared domestic and care workers. However, certain migrant domestic and care workers might advance chances of obtaining a residence or work permit more easily than others<sup>55</sup>. Following this, residence permits or other legal statuses relating to work permits are likely to strongly influence whether workers choose legal or irregular illegal access to the labour market. The often informal character of domestic work leaves many domestic workers with almost no protection. Those with no legal contract are therefore most vulnerable to exploitation. **Several countries estimate that most of domestic care work is undocumented and therefore not encompassed by labour rights or social security in the first place<sup>56</sup>.**

A large share of domestic and care work takes place outside the regular economy, with verbal contracting, with different employers, etc. In Spain, for example, verbal contracting is generalized, even if the law provides the formalization of contracts of a fixed duration of at least four weeks. In Hungary,

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<sup>52</sup> FRA 2011, op cit, p. 17f.; PICUM 2018, op cit.

<sup>53</sup> Maltese and Belgian questionnaires; Lutz and Polenga-Möllenbeck 2010, op cit, p. 424; Lutz and Polenga-Möllenbeck 2012, op cit, p. 29

<sup>54</sup> Austrian, Belgian, German, Greek and Hungarian questionnaires.

<sup>55</sup> PICUM 2018, op cit.

<sup>56</sup> German, Greek, Hungarian and Maltese questionnaire; FRA 2011 and 2018; Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck 2010, p. 424; EFFE and EFSI 2020, p. 3; EFSI 2018; Ad-PHS 2020 (op cit)

most of the domestic workers do their job without registration, which makes it virtually impossible for them to get any labour law protection.

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Existing regulations on domestic care work often are not enacted. In order to work towards implementation of legal rights, workers would have to collectivize, which barely happens due to the high fragmentation of workplaces and the isolating work mode.

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Not having a formal and legal contract leaves the door open for abuse. These workers can be victims of human trafficking, sexual abuse, or live in unacceptable living conditions. Working time regulations are not followed, salaries often do not meet minimum wages, and they do not benefit from health insurance or social security. In Portugal, as in other countries, irregular workers are not entitled to social security support, leaving the completely unprotected. In Greece, even though

undeclared workers have access to public health services, undeclared migrant workers have such access only under certain conditions. In Belgium, they have access to public health, but they will hesitate to use basic health care services or to complain about their living conditions out of fear of being discovered and being expelled from the country.

These workers often lack knowledge of or have no access to the necessary legal information and support services, even more so when they do not speak the language of the region they are working in. When the domestic and care worker's rights are violated, it is in general very difficult for them to provide evidence. Furthermore, women in these vulnerable situations are afraid of being fired, losing their income, being detected as an undeclared worker, or worse, being expelled from the country if they are irregular residents. Therefore, they almost never file a complaint for sexual harassment, abuse, or discrimination in general. In Cyprus, for example, domestic and care workers are protected from physical or verbal violence. In practice however, due to their irregular status and their fear of being deported, they are unwilling to complain about abusive behaviours by their employers. In the case of 24-hour care work even successful legalization does not necessarily improve its by tendency exploitative working conditions<sup>57</sup>.

Existing regulations on domestic care work often are not enacted. In order to work towards implementation of legal rights, workers would have to collectivize, which barely happens due to the high fragmentation of workplaces and the isolating work mode<sup>58</sup>. Unions have very difficult access to these atomized workplaces making mobilization for collective bargaining especially difficult<sup>59</sup>. Individual bargaining on wage or other working conditions are often suffocated by the threat of dismissal or

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<sup>57</sup> Bauer and Österle 2016, pp. 208, 210; Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck 2012, op cit, p. 30

<sup>58</sup> e.g. Spanish questionnaire

<sup>59</sup> Carls, Kristin (2012). Decent Work for Domestic Workers. The state of labour rights, social protection and trade union initiatives in Europe. An ACTRAV/ITC-ILO report realized in cooperation with ETUC and EFFAT. p. 5

deportation in undocumented work relations<sup>60</sup>. Against this backdrop undocumented work bears the risk of even lower income in average than documented work<sup>61</sup>.

## 5. The impact of the COVID-19 crisis

The precarious situation of domestic and care workers became even more difficult with the COVID-19 pandemic. **While many social inequalities surfaced during the crisis, the situation of domestic and care workers remained largely invisible.**

The predominantly female workers were particularly impacted by the crisis. They were not always provided with the necessary protective equipment to ensure safe working conditions. In close-contact jobs, such as elderly care, they were extra vulnerable for contagion – being at risk of only being infected but also of bringing the virus to their own homes or their other customers. This caused a lot of additional stress for these workers, which came on top of extra-long working hours. In Germany, 24-hour care workers in private homes were vaccinated very late compared to other care workers, or not at all.

Furthermore, many households decided to terminate the contract with domestic and care workers, fearing the presence of external persons during the confinement period. Workers providing elderly care in private homes were also asked not to come, out of fear of getting infected. Many workers in private homes lost their job (e.g. Czech Republic, Belgium, Portugal). Declared workers could benefit from unemployment benefits or other financial aids. In Spain, for example, temporary measures were implemented in order to mitigate the impact of the crisis, such as the extraordinary subsidy for domestic workers that were forced to suspend their work. Undeclared workers, however, were left with no job and no income. The closing of borders put further strains on foreign workers, who were left stranded abroad, having no job, no unemployment benefits, no financial support, no income to pay rent or daily needs, and unable to return to their home countries.

## 6. Final considerations

**In the context of domestic and care work, intersecting categories of discrimination are made socially significant in such a way that workers are confronted with an aggregation of discrimination risks.** The choice of work alone is closely related to the intersection of class, gender, residence status, and citizenship. Working conditions such as low wage or isolated and undocumented work, then lead to second-order discrimination risks. For instance, dependence on employers or commercial placement agencies is characterized by a lack of legal protection that exacerbates the power imbalance between workers and others. This vulnerability means an increased risk of exploitation and abuse, as well as the

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<sup>60</sup> e.g. Cyrian questionnaire

<sup>61</sup> FRA 2011, op cit, p. 23; European Agency for Fundamental Rights (2018), Out of sight: migrant women exploited in domestic work, [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2018-migrant-women-labour-exploitation-domestic-work\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-migrant-women-labour-exploitation-domestic-work_en.pdf)

lack of means of resistance. Care is at the root of gender inequality, but it is in itself a vector of socioeconomic inequality and an accessible privilege for those who have private resources. Therefore, the vicious cycle of precarity and vulnerability of domestic care workers perpetuates. Most of the situations described above refer to breaches of labour legislations and not of gender discrimination law. However, since the vast majority of domestic and care workers across Europe are women, it is undeniable that the gender dimension needs to be taken into account when tackling these issues.



### **III. Conclusion**

While the situation of domestic and care workers in Europe is usually envisaged through the lens of labour rights, the COVID-19 pandemic has further revealed the various inequalities and discriminations these particular workers face on a daily basis. This paper showcases how the experience of domestic and care workers should also be approached from an equality perspective.

Indeed, the majority of caregivers in Europe are women, often migrant women in vulnerable situations. The proportion of women and in particular migrant women increases when caregiving is provided in a domestic environment. Moreover, care work is often considered low-skilled, undervalued and underpaid. This means that domestic and care workers often exist in an intersecting reality between gender inequalities, poverty, racism and migration issues. Domestic and care workers face particular vulnerabilities including precarious contracts, low wages and sub-optimal healthcare protection, difficult access to the labour market, language barriers, insufficient recognition of their education, and heightened risks of sexual harassment and violence.

In the context of domestic and care work, intersecting categories of discrimination are made socially significant in such a way that workers are confronted with an aggregation of discrimination risks. The choice of work alone is closely related to the intersection of class, gender, residence status, and citizenship. Working conditions such as low wage or isolated and undocumented work, then lead to second-order discrimination risks. For instance, dependence on employers or commercial placement agencies is characterized by a lack of legal protection that exacerbates the power imbalance between workers and others. This vulnerability means an increased risk of exploitation and abuse, as well as the lack of means of resistance. Care is at the root of gender inequality, but it is in itself a vector of socioeconomic inequality and an accessible privilege for those who have private resources. Therefore, the vicious cycle of precarity and vulnerability of domestic care workers perpetuates. Most of the situations described above refer to breaches of labour legislations and not of gender discrimination law. However, since the vast majority of domestic and care workers across Europe are women, it is undeniable that the gender dimension needs to be taken into account when tackling these issues.



Furthermore, the **lack or insufficient affordable, accessible and quality care services for all** in most European countries has clear negative consequences:

It makes it difficult to attract and retain skilled care workers<sup>62</sup>, particularly when caregiving is provided in a domestic environment.

Insufficient investment leads to women (in many cases, migrant women in vulnerable conditions) to fill the caregiving gap in domestic environment<sup>63</sup>.

The situation has a negative impact on women's economic independence and participation in all life aspects. Carers also normally face higher poverty rates and higher prevalence of mental health problems<sup>64</sup>.

Equality actors, including policy-makers and equality bodies, should further grasp this issue and push for better conditions for domestic and care workers. Because **qualitative care is not just a labour issue. It is an equality issue.**

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62 Social Protection Committee and European Commission. Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (June, 2021) Long-Term Care Report: Trends and challenges and opportunities in an ageing society. <https://www.ifsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/KE-09-21-202-EN-N-1.pdf>

63 Ibid

64 OECD (May, 2011). Help Wanted. Providing and Paying for Long Term Care. [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/help-wanted\\_9789264097759-en#page1](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/help-wanted_9789264097759-en#page1)

# Equinet Member Equality Bodies

## ALBANIA

Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination  
[www.kmd.al](http://www.kmd.al)

## AUSTRIA

Austrian Disability Ombudsman  
[www.behindertenanwalt.gv.at](http://www.behindertenanwalt.gv.at)

## AUSTRIA

Ombud for Equal Treatment  
[www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.gv.at](http://www.gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft.gv.at)

## BELGIUM

Institute for the Equality of Women and Men  
[www.igvm-iefh.belgium.be](http://www.igvm-iefh.belgium.be)

## BELGIUM

Unia (Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities)  
[www.unia.be](http://www.unia.be)

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
[www.ombudsmen.gov.ba](http://www.ombudsmen.gov.ba)

## BULGARIA

Commission for Protection against Discrimination  
[www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com](http://www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com)

## CROATIA

Office of the Ombudsman  
[www.ombudsman.hr](http://www.ombudsman.hr)

## CROATIA

Ombudsperson for Gender Equality  
[www.prs.hr](http://www.prs.hr)

## CROATIA

Ombudswoman for Persons with Disabilities  
[www.posi.hr](http://www.posi.hr)

## CYPRUS

Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman)  
[www.ombudsman.gov.cy](http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy)

## CZECH REPUBLIC

Public Defender of Rights  
[www.ochrance.cz](http://www.ochrance.cz)

## DENMARK

Danish Institute for Human Rights  
[www.humanrights.dk](http://www.humanrights.dk)

## ESTONIA

Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner  
[www.volinik.ee](http://www.volinik.ee)

## FINLAND

Non-Discrimination Ombudsman  
[www.syrjinta.fi](http://www.syrjinta.fi)

## FINLAND

Ombudsman for Equality  
[www.tasa-arvo.fi](http://www.tasa-arvo.fi)

## FRANCE

Defender of Rights  
[www.defenseurdesdroits.fr](http://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr)

## GEORGIA

Public Defender of Georgia (Ombudsman)  
[www.ombudsman.ge](http://www.ombudsman.ge)

## GERMANY

Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency  
[www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de](http://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de)

## GREECE

Greek Ombudsman  
[www.synigoros.gr](http://www.synigoros.gr)

## HUNGARY

Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights  
[www.ajbh.hu](http://www.ajbh.hu)

## IRELAND

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission  
[www.ihrec.ie](http://www.ihrec.ie)

## ITALY

National Office against Racial Discrimination - UNAR  
[www.unar.it](http://www.unar.it)

## KOSOVO\*

Ombudsperson Institution  
[www.oik-rks.org](http://www.oik-rks.org)

## LATVIA

Office of the Ombudsman  
[www.tiesibsargs.lv](http://www.tiesibsargs.lv)

## LITHUANIA

Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson  
[www.lygybe.lt](http://www.lygybe.lt)

## LUXEMBURG

Centre for Equal Treatment  
[www.cet.lu](http://www.cet.lu)

## MALTA

Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability  
[www.crpdp.org.mt](http://www.crpdp.org.mt)

## MALTA

National Commission for the Promotion of Equality  
[www.equality.gov.mt](http://www.equality.gov.mt)

## MOLDOVA

Council on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality  
[www.egalitate.md](http://www.egalitate.md)

## MONTENEGRO

Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman)  
[www.ombudsman.co.me](http://www.ombudsman.co.me)

## NETHERLANDS

Netherlands Institute for Human Rights  
[www.mensenrechten.nl](http://www.mensenrechten.nl)

## NORTH MACEDONIA

Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination  
[www.kszd.mk](http://www.kszd.mk)

## NORWAY

Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud  
[www.ldo.no](http://www.ldo.no)

## POLAND

Commissioner for Human Rights  
[www.rpo.gov.pl](http://www.rpo.gov.pl)

## PORTUGAL

Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality  
[www.cig.gov.pt](http://www.cig.gov.pt)

## PORTUGAL

Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment  
[www.cite.gov.pt](http://www.cite.gov.pt)

## PORTUGAL

High Commission for Migration  
[www.acm.gov.pt](http://www.acm.gov.pt)

## ROMANIA

National Council for Combating Discrimination  
[www.cncd.ro](http://www.cncd.ro)

## SERBIA

Commissioner for Protection of Equality  
[www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs](http://www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs)

## SLOVAKIA

Slovak National Centre for Human Rights  
[www.snslp.sk](http://www.snslp.sk)

## SLOVENIA

Advocate of the Principle of Equality  
[www.zagovornik.si](http://www.zagovornik.si)

## SPAIN

Council for the Elimination of Ethnic or Racial Discrimination  
[www.igualdadynodiscriminacion.igualdad.gob.es](http://www.igualdadynodiscriminacion.igualdad.gob.es)

## SPAIN

Institute of Women  
[www.inmujer.es](http://www.inmujer.es)

## SWEDEN

Equality Ombudsman  
[www.do.se](http://www.do.se)

## UNITED KINGDOM - GREAT BRITAIN

Equality and Human Rights Commission  
[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

## UNITED KINGDOM - NORTHERN IRELAND

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland  
[www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

*\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*



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