

Press release after the 3rd Caritas East-West Workshop "Fair Care Migration and Mobility in Europe", 29 Nov 2019

Live-in care workers need to be better protected and accompanied

Caritas Europa calls for clear labour migration rules relative to live-in-care workers, who look after and care for people at home. Agencies that provide live-in care workers must meet quality standards; social security, health and safety at work must be guaranteed.

In Western Europe, especially in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, an estimated 1-2 million people, mostly women from Central and Eastern Europe, are working as so-called live-in-care workers: they live in the household of people in need of care, enabling them to remain in a familiar environment in as they grow older or immobile. Caritas Europa urges politicians to advance on the concept of "fair care migration and mobility" and the definition of minimum standards, including quality standards for agencies that provide live-in-care workers. Please find here the [Final declaration on the 3rd Caritas East-West Workshop "Fair Care Migration and Mobility in Europe"](#).

How these workers are recruited, what rights they have and how their employment can be recognised in their later careers is typically neglected in political discourses. Many care workers have unclear working hours and inadequate social security.

"Who looks after the elderly in our society and under what conditions? This question is acute not only in Germany, but throughout Europe, but the employment of live-in care workers, which many families fall back on, is still in a legal grey area", said Eva Welskop-Deffaa, board member of social policy of the German Caritas Association. "We expect the new EU Commission to give priority to the Green Paper on the Demographics of Care Migration, announced for summer 2020, in particular relative to mobile EU live-in-care workers."

Live in-care workers must have the same labour rights as other workers in the destination country. "It is vital that European policy makers recognise the many societal needs related to Europe's aging population and that they take measures to ensure high-quality fair care standards and protection via the European labour authority", says Shannon Pfohman, Policy and Advocacy Director of Caritas Europa.

"Fair Care Migration" also means that the perspective of the countries of origin is included. "We have built structures on the ground to provide decent care to those in need of care, but we cannot sustain these structures if the workforce leaves in droves," said András Márton, Caritas Director of the Romanian archdiocese of Alba Iulia, at the Caritas seminar in Berlin 26-28 Nov. on this topic. "We urgently need European solutions".

Caritas organisations in sending and receiving countries, such as Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland, and Ukraine, for instance, have been working together since 2012 to successfully test appropriate models for the placement, support and qualification of migrant live-in-care workers, for example, in the form of East-West partnerships between Caritas organisations.

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