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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
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The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) can mitigate the impact of demographic change in various ways. 22 Member States have used ESF+ resources to support health and long-term care (LTC) sectors and services – reaching a total of EUR 6.7 billion during the 2021-2027 programming period. This includes activities that promote active and healthy aging, enhance family and community-based care services and improve the accessibility, effectiveness and resilience of healthcare systems. The ESF+ also helps reskill and upskill care workers; it funds measures to help improve their working conditions.

The Council Recommendation on access to affordable high-quality LTC¹ provides a policy framework addressing all people in need of LTC. Member States' implementation reports² are summarised in the 2024 Annual Report of the Social Protection Committee (SPC)³. The Commission will publish an indicator-based monitoring framework and a progress report on the implementation of the LTC Recommendation to the Council by 2027.

Horizon Europe⁴ contributes to research on demography and the modernisation of welfare states, including LTC. In this framework, the Horizon project 'BB-Future'⁵, aims to quantify, based on a set of quantitative models and key micro and macroeconomic outcomes, the size of the care wave, understand its implications on economic and social outcomes, and develop policy recommendations to prepare for the care wave at EU and national level. Started in 2023, the project will run until December 2026. Its eighth and last work-package will consist in dissemination activities, including conferences and workshops with policy makers and stakeholders.

¹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC_2022_476_R_0001

² https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/social-protection-social-inclusion/social-protection/long-term-care_en

³ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/social-protection-committee-annual-report-2024-review-social-protection-performance-monitor-sppm-and_en

⁴ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

⁵ <https://www.bruegel.org/bb-future>