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E-002906/2026

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(18.8.2026)

The Commission agrees with the fact that ensuring a skilled workforce in the care sector is key to providing affordable and quality care. The European Care Strategy¹ adopted in 2022 aims to ensure quality, affordable and accessible care services while supporting formal and informal carers. The Council Recommendation on access to affordable high-quality long-term care² (LTC) sets out a comprehensive policy framework and the national implementation plans³ showcase numerous investments and reforms to address workforce challenges. Analytical evidence⁴⁵ and the large-scale skills partnership for LTC under the Pact for Skills⁶ further strengthen the professionalisation of workforce.

Improving the working conditions for the LTC workforce needs to be supported by effective collective bargaining. At social partners' request, the Commission set up in 2023 the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for social services⁷ to improve working conditions, ensure affordable high quality social services and promote higher standards in care services. A key milestone was the adoption of the Joint Framework of Action on staff retention and recruitment in social services⁸ in June 2025. The Commission's renewed commitment to social dialogue and collective bargaining was confirmed in the Pact for European Social Dialogue⁹ signed by the Commission and EU cross-industry social partners in 2025.

Preparatory work on the European Care Deal is underway and it will be presented in 2027.

¹ COM/2022/440 final.

² 2022/C 476/01.

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https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?advSearchKey=ltimpreg&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=22&doc_submit=&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0&iframe=true.

⁴ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/new-reports-reviewing-application-eu-standards-governing-working-conditions-long-term-care-sector-2024-11-29_en.

⁵ <https://www.ela.europa.eu/en/media/4384>.

⁶ https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/index_en.

⁷ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/eu-employment-policies/social-dialogue/cross-industry-and-sectoral-social-dialogue/social-services-sectoral-social-dialogue_en?prefLang=sl.

⁸ https://www.epsu.org/sites/default/files/article/files/SS-FoA_FINAL.pdf.

⁹ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-and-social-partners-sign-joint-pact-strengthen-social-dialogue-europe-2025-03-05_en.